



Chartered
Institute of
Housing
Cymru



Good Practice Compendium

Sharing the lessons learnt from the Welsh
Housing Awards 2021

Headline sponsor:



Welcome

The Good Practice Compendium is one of the most important publications that CIH Cymru produces each year.

It is the publication that pulls together examples and case studies of how you, housing professionals, make a difference - a difference to the tenants and communities that we serve across Wales, but also to wider public policy objectives that make a difference to all our lives.

And the importance of sharing that good practice has taken on an even greater significance as we continue to navigate our way through the twin challenges of an unprecedented global pandemic and climate emergency.

Once again, after a year's hiatus due to the pandemic, it is fantastic to see so many positive examples from the sector in Wales of innovation.

Whether innovative approaches to tackling homelessness or frontline housing staff reacting swiftly to engage with tenants in different ways during lockdown; whether it's innovative off-site MMC

development or examples of how to get the most out of collaborative approaches; and whether it's examples from the PRS, private developers, housing associations or local authority housing teams; the Good Practice Compendium has become the must-have record of the sector's innovation, development and achievement in Wales.

CIH Cymru is the home of professional development for the housing sector in Wales and absorbing and learning from good practice is a commitment that all of us, as housing professionals, must make in order to deliver the best outcome for those we serve - our tenants and stakeholders.

We will continue to support our members in meeting the challenges that will dominate our industry over the coming months and years by supporting that process. If we are proud to be professionals, then we are proud to learn!



Matt Dicks
National director, CIH Cymru

		Page
Best housing story		6
Twyncarmel food parcel project	Wales & West Housing & David Cooksey	6
Individualised environmental projects	Isle of Anglesey Housing Services	7
Donna Davies, team leader - specialist services	Tai Tarian	8
Communications in a crisis		10
Grŵp Cynefin Communications	Grŵp Cynefin	10
Excellence in customer service		12
Digital Lettings with United Welsh	United Welsh	12
Customer excellence project	Adra	14
Excellence in health and wellbeing		16
Health & Wellbeing driving cultural change	ClwydAlyn	16
Coastal Hub and Yard	Coastal Housing	18
Zest	Melin Homes	19
Newport City Council and Melin Homes - holistic approaches to move on accommodation	Newport City Council	20
Vision Friends	Royal National Institute of Blind People Cymru	21
WELL@WORK	Tai Tarian	23
HWB Dinbych Arts for health social prescribing project	Grŵp Cynefin	24
HAPI (Healthy, Aspiring, Prosperous and Inclusive)	Newydd Housing Association	26
The Book of Strength	Pobl Group	27
Clinical nurse specialist-homeless & vulnerable adults	Abertawe Medical Partnership - Swansea City Health	28
The Reflections Network	The Wallich	30
Excellence in housing innovation		32
A World First LoRaWAN Automated Emergency Lighting Deployment	Barcud Housing	32
Void Management Unit	Cardiff Council	33
Heating on demand	Merthyr Tydfil Housing Association	35
Newport City Council and Melin Homes - Holistic approaches to move on accommodation	Newport City Council	36
Newport Independent Living Strategy in Action	Newport City Council	37
Virtual Tenancy Ready Classroom	Newydd Housing Association	38
Swansea Council community scale whole house retrofits for a low carbon future	Swansea Council	39

In order to keep the authenticity of these projects, and to convey the passion felt by those involved we have not altered any of the text submitted to us as part of these entries.

Working in partnership		41
Carbon Literacy Cartrefi Cymru Consortium	Cynnal Cymru	41
IoT for Fire Safety: Working Together to Raise The Bar	Barcud Housing	43
Ending Evictions into Homelessness Strategic Partnership	Bron Afon Community Housing	44
Hafachat	Cadwyn Housing Association	46
Community Support from the Gwynedd Housing Partnership	Gwynedd Council	47
Fit and Fed Merthyr Tydfil	Merthyr Tydfil Housing Association	48
Newport Independent Living Strategy in Action	Newport City Council	49
Newport City Council and Melin Homes - holistic approaches to move on accommodation	Newport City Council	50
Ty Tom Jones: from zero to complete supported housing project in 6 weeks	The Wallich	51
CAPITAL project	Public Health Wales	53
'Working Together' - Tai Tarian and the emergency incident response	Tai Tarian	54
Making a difference in Dinas Powys	United Welsh	56
Supporting future generations		58
First time buyers empty homes grants	Empty Homes Teams - Ynys Mon & Gwynedd	58
Supporting communities		60
Here to Help	Cartrefi Conwy and Creating Enterprise	60
FACE	Melin Homes	62
Proud to do our part for Merthyr!	Merthyr Tydfil Housing Association	63
Swansea Together - Feeding the vulnerably housed during the COVID19 pandemic	Matthew's House, Swansea	64
'Safe and Well' - Tai Tarian and the pandemic response	Tai Tarian	65
Tackling social isolation with Connect	United Welsh	67
Wales & West Housing Group Covid Community Support Project	Wales & West Housing Group	68
All Together	Adra	69
Excellence in championing equality and diversity		71
LGBTQ+ older people and sheltered & retirement housing - a good practice guide	erosh	71

In order to keep the authenticity of these projects, and to convey the passion felt by those involved we have not altered any of the text submitted to us as part of these entries.

Delivering high quality homes		73
Ffordd Yr Haearn	Wales & West Housing	73
Cwrt Ysgold Maelgwn	Cartrefi Conwy	74
High quality local homes at The Hedgerows in Pennard, Gower	Coastal Housing	76
The Mill, Canton	Lovell Partnerships Ltd	77
Ymyl Yr Afon	Lovell	78
Golwg Y Bryn, Ebbw Vale	Lovell	80

Housing team of the year		82
Supported Housing Team	Cadwyn Housing Association	82
Newydd Housing's Community Regeneration Team	Newydd Housing Association	83
Housing First	Cardiff Council	85
Welfare Team	Grwp Cynefin	86
Adra's Neighbourhood Services Team	Adra	87

Leadership		89
Gavin Harvey, sustainability and conservation coordinator	Coastal Housing	90

In order to keep the authenticity of these projects, and to convey the passion felt by those involved we have not altered any of the text submitted to us as part of these entries.

BEST HOUSING STORY

Sponsored by:

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The award celebrates success stories in our sector over the past year where people have gone above and beyond to make a positive difference in their community.

Twyncarmel food parcel project

Lead organisation: Wales & West Housing & David Cooksey



Statement of support

In Merthyr Tydfil, Wales & West Housing (WWH) resident David Cooksey responded to the demands of local families who were just managing prior to national lockdown and thrown into further poverty by the pandemic.

Before the Covid-19 pandemic David was collecting surplus food from local supermarkets including M&S Merthyr Tydfil and Farm foods and, with a small group of volunteers, was making 60 breakfasts and lunches a week for older residents at the retirement scheme, where he lives.

In March WWH staff who were making regular welfare calls to families in crisis in the Twyncarmel area, approached David to help residents struggling to feed their families. David started using surplus food to put together parcels and delivered them to families in need.

David has continued this voluntary service throughout the pandemic, collecting the surplus food at the end of the day and delivering to 40 households on Twyncarmel. Most evenings he doesn't get home until 9.30 after making the deliveries.

The families he has helped include single parents, families whose main wage earners lost their jobs during the lockdown and elderly and vulnerable residents who were shielding.

The collections, which have continued throughout and after lockdowns, have been set up through the Neighbourly scheme that links business with local good causes. The group were also awarded a Neighbourly Community Fund grant which they are using to support these families.

As a result of the work of David and other volunteers in the community continue to do as part of the local Covid response, the Merthyr Tydfil Food Poverty Network has plans to take the lessons learnt from the Covid response and expand the work to respond to local demand for residents in need.

Outcomes and achievements

40 families and individuals living in the Twyncarmel area are now receiving food hampers on average twice a week.

Inspired by the work of David and other local volunteers the Merthyr Tydfil Food Poverty Network has plans to work with local housing providers and food providers to set up a social enterprise to continue to respond to local demand for residents in need.

Residents' feedback

A single mum, who had to give up her job when her son's school closed at the start of the pandemic and

was struggling to feed her family said: "Thank you for your help in this hard time for many families. I was so grateful for the help that David gave to my family and other families in the area. It was a very difficult time for us and David is a good person."

Lillian, age 82, says "Having the food from David makes a big difference - I don't have to go shopping much and that helps keep me safe."

Sharon Jones, Wales & West Housing's Tenancy Support Officer: "He is so proud to see difference his work is making to people's lives and is making many new friends. He is amazing in my eyes!"

Individualised environmental projects

Lead organisation: Isle of Anglesey Housing Services

**Partner organisation: BT/DU CONSTRUCTION/SKY/
CLWYD ALYN / WILLIAMS HOMES**



Statement of support

- Normally, Anglesey County Council tenants or leaseholders could usually apply for The Environmental and Community Improvement Fund which allows them to bid for a grant up to the value of £5,000 for environmental projects to make the community a safer, tidier and nicer place to live. This grant is available every year and gives tenants the opportunity to come together and improve their estate.
- However, due to the global pandemic we were unable to go ahead with this fund in its existing format, but still wanted to ensure that the health and wellbeing of our tenants were at the heart of the service. The fund was changed to be the 'Tenants Individual Environmental fund'.

- The fund was available for all Council Tenants and leaseholders. There were two packs available and Indoor Gardening pack and an Outdoor Gardening pack.
- There is no doubt that this fund was very popular. The referral window closed within a couple of hours of opening due to the high demand.
- Referrals were accepted via 'AppMON' and tenants were able to complete applications on behalf of friends and family who were unable to complete the form themselves.
- We will be considering doing this again in 2021.
- In total 285 successful applications were received. This amounts to over 7% of our tenants partaking in this participation scheme.
- In order to obtain as much feedback as possible. A competition was created at the end. We asked tenants to send in an email and or picture letting us know how they put their packs to good use. We used a random number generator to pick two emails at random as prize winners to win further gardening items.

Outcomes and achievements

The outcomes were fantastic - we received positive feedback from so many that were involved.

Children enjoyed their gardening packs and spent hours outside 'gardening'

People living in flats reported they enjoyed planting their indoor plants / flowers and watching them grow

We were approached by several partner agencies, RSL's to see how this was co-ordinated and whether it provided the positive outcomes we were aiming for - which it did.

This occurred during the initial lockdown period, which was an intense and often lonely and isolating time for so many of our tenants. Having this project supported tenant wellbeing. It also gave officers a good feeling of warmth and feeling they were able to support the improvement of tenant wellbeing during a very difficult time within our generation.

Donna Davies, team leader - specialist services

Lead organisation: Tai Tarian



Statement of support

Tai Tarian is one of the largest social landlords in Wales and has responsibility for over 9,000 properties across Neath Port Talbot and the surrounding area. Tai Tarian is committed to providing good quality housing and a range of services to help people manage their homes. As a community housing mutual, the aim is to continually work to understand the needs of tenants and members to deliver services based on what matters.

The vision of 'Making a Difference' is inextricably linked with the mission for great homes and great communities. Within this framework, Tai Tarian is 'Tenant Focussed' contributing to sustainable homes and communities, fostering a sense of community pride and belonging.

Over the past year Donna's commitment to being 'Tenant Focussed' has shone through the pandemic by being prepared to go over and above to improve the community and support tenants.

As a Housing Officer, Donna has helped drive forward the Church Place project to address tenant's concerns about security and storage. To overcome obstacles and develop trust, Donna has drawn upon the principles of co-design by working with tenants, staff and the Council to identify community assets and agree joint actions.

Prior to the pandemic the positive social aspects of having an afternoon tea or a quiz would also be incorporated. Such events had formed relationships and trust which assisted Donna in overcoming the challenges at this complex during the pandemic.

During the first lockdown, the Safe and Well project was launched. It aimed to support vulnerable residents advised to self-isolate but with no support from family, friends or neighbours. The project was developed remotely and Donna was one of the staff making wellbeing calls.

Case Study: Despite moving teams, Donna showed her commitment and acted beyond the requirements of her role by continuing to carry out a wellbeing call to a 75 year old tenant at the Church Place complex, during which she would pay her rent over the phone. The contact made a real difference to this tenant who was self-isolating due to being on the NHS shielding list, whose family lived abroad and who had previously been the victim of fraud. When the tenant explained how concerned she was that she had been unable to travel to get her Covid-19 vaccine, Donna contacted the local health board to book another appointment and a voluntary sector agency to book safe transport.

Positive feedback from tenants for Donna during the pandemic includes "I received a phone call yesterday...regarding universal credit as my husband has been laid off due to the Coronavirus. In these stressful times she made me feel calm and went above and beyond to help...in the uncertain times it was so lovely to have someone there to help and advice me and my family, thank you Donna."

In response to the pandemic, an Acts of Kindness fund was established by staff from their own financial contributions. Donna has made a number of nominations for tenants, including a tenant who had been re-housed with support put in place because he was experiencing mental health difficulties. After the tenant received his St David's Day gift he called to say "it meant the world to him and he was overwhelmed... he hasn't received a gift in years and he was really taken back."

Whether working on projects or supporting tenants, Donna's positive attitude focusses upon:

- stronger relationships
- better understanding of roles
- increased knowledge of good practice

This approach to improving the outcomes for people has also been recently demonstrated when Donna took part in a video as part of the Live Fear Free domestic abuse campaign.

Outcomes and achievements

Outcomes:

- Church Place Project: Sustainable homes where people can thrive by tailoring services for improved tenancies and reduced homelessness
- Safe and Well Project for supporting vulnerable people: Improved response to the pandemic with better community information and problem solving
- Acts of Kindness Fund: Sustainable communities achieving their full potential through building relationships of trust and mutuality

Achievements:

- Personal commitment to being 'Tenant Focused' when undertaking projects and assisting tenants.
- Overcoming significant obstacles for the Church Place project in order to improve the complex's security and storage as well as increase trust between all parties. Key information was shared, actions implemented and progress monitored.

- Personal dedication to making a difference by delivering a responsive service, building rapport with tenants and ensuring they receive the support they require to have a sustainable tenancy.
- Assisted in delivering a collaborative approach for the Safe and Well project, going above and beyond to ensure tenants could manage as well as access the Covid-19 vaccination programme.
- Positive attitude to identifying opportunities to nominate tenants for Acts of Kindness paid for via the staff refreshments fund.
- Commitment to raising awareness of domestic abuse particularly during the pandemic.

COMMUNICATIONS IN A CRISIS

This award recognises landlords whose communication with their tenants and residents has been outstanding over the past year, keeping them fully informed and supported or helping them to stay connected.

Grŵp Cynefin Communications

Grŵp Cynefin



Statement of support

Grŵp Cynefin made it a priority to communicate effectively with tenants and service users during the Covid 19 crisis. We used a variety of communication methods including online meetings, social media platforms and website, video calls, phone-calls, newsletters, texts and e-mails.

It was important for us to share information of all kind - e.g. health and wellbeing support, financial support, hints and tips, maintenance service updates, the use of light-hearted content on social media and newsletters as well as messages and updates from the Chief Executive and Leadership team.

We had to balance sharing important information, messages and updates with reflecting the community spirit and activities. We adapted our ways of communicating to target the various audiences effectively, as outlined below.

Tenants Newsletter

We issued a special Coronavirus edition and kept the content light-hearted and informative. Following issues have continued with similar support.

Grŵp Cynefin Website

A dedicated coronavirus page was created with relevant news or documentation updated regularly. <http://www.grwpcynefin.org/cy/coronavirus>

Infographics

We engaged with tenants using graphics, plain language, and minimal text.

Social Media

We created a dedicated role to ensure effective and consistent communication, with a weekly schedule of messaging from ourselves, key partners and agencies.

Twitter page: @Grŵp_Cynefin

Facebook: @grwpcynefin

Sialens Cynefin Challenge Instagram Account

To tackle boredom and isolation among our younger tenants, we created an Instagram account, setting challenges such as cooking, photography, arts and crafts, Tik Tok Challenge etc.

Tenants Participation Online Group

Since March, we've held weekly Zoom tenants meetings. Over 30 meetings have been held to date and feedback is positive

Helo magazine Gorwel

A special edition was created for our Gorwel service users in Anglesey.

Older People's Weekly Newsletter

This was produced for all tenants at our extra care schemes with pictures and graphics, larger text and printed larger copies for ease of reading.

Older People activities

Weekly 'Cuppa and Catch up' sessions were held outdoors at our extra care for tenants to chat face to face. Large outdoor screens were installed so that activities such as chair yoga could continue safely.

Extra Care 'Zoom Rooms'

We set up a 'zoom room' where tenants could talk to friends and family virtually on Zoom.

Wellbeing Phonecalls Extra Care

We rang every tenant and sent out a questionnaire and provided painting materials, drawing materials, puzzles and books based on the result.

Older People's weekly activity packs

We provided these for our tenants in extra care schemes, with crosswords, puzzles, quizzes, wordsearches, sudoku and colouring. We provided these in large print also.

Wellbeing Phonecalls

We worked with Cyngor Gwynedd to call those who were shielding to see if they needed support and to arrange weekly food packages.

Wellbeing texts and emails

We sent these with an option for a further wellbeing phone call. Following the success of the scheme, we will continue to use text and e-mails in future.

Whatsapp with tenants

The Housing Department increased its use of texts and Whatsapp, with great results. Tenants also used Whatsapp video calls while starting and ending tenancies.

Social Prescribing

A Facebook page was created for our Arts for Health groups and sent art packs to people's homes and invited them to join a weekly zoom class or receive a weekly phone call.

Encourage new tenants to get involved online

Tenants enjoyed getting involved from the comfort of their own home. We hosted quizzes and 'a cuppa and chat' sessions.

Digital support over the phone to help them get online

We helped some of our Tenant Participation members get online and provided digital coaching for tenants in extra care schemes.

Outcomes and achievements

Grŵp Cynefin were able to adapt their communication to the varying audiences and did this extremely effectively, e.g. the communication with the elderly was very different to the way they communicated with younger audiences. The variety of methods outlined above proves this.

Through the Weekly Tenants Meetings tenants noted they were very satisfied with all communication received by Grŵp Cynefin as well as offered more suggestions including the quiz and Zoom for New tenants. Tenants were also extremely grateful to staff when making the wellbeing phone calls, texts and emails, noting it meant a lot that the contact had been made and they felt valued.

One tenant said "Without these meetings and keeping in touch with you weekly, we would be in a much worse place. You have really kept us going during these hard times. Thank you."

Another tenant said ""With the Covid virus keeping us isolated I have found the online meetings we have had very good for my mental health. I get to converse with friends and people outside of my family. I get to have a voice on policies, community projects etc. They also help break up the week. They make me feel wanted and appreciated."

EXCELLENCE IN CUSTOMER SERVICE

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This award recognises housing teams who go above and beyond to deliver truly outstanding customer service.

Digital Lettings with United Welsh

United Welsh



Statement of support

United Welsh is a housing association in South Wales that provides over 6,000 homes. We pride ourselves on building homes, creating communities and transforming lives.

Delivering a customer-focused lettings process to support people to join United Welsh is a crucial part of providing homes to people who need them most.

The traditional "face-to-face" customer interaction for lettings of new lets and re-let properties, however, became problematic with the health pandemic and restrictions brought by coronavirus.

United Welsh was faced with the challenge of keeping new tenants and staff safe, but also easing the homelessness crisis faced by people in our communities and Local Authority partners.

We work across 11 Local Authority areas, some of which have reported the highest infection rates per population size in Wales and the UK. This, coupled with the rising number of people presenting as homeless and in need of affordable housing, meant that a real task was on our hands to offer lettings in a way that protected the needs, and of course, the health, of our customers.

A core part of United Welsh's business strategy is to offer digital solutions to our customers so that they can receive a great service in an easy way.

We felt a digital lettings process would meet the needs of customers in the current climate, but with the constantly changing Covid-19 environment, we had to adapt quickly.

Traditionally, the lettings process is delivered by United Welsh's Neighbourhood team and supported by our repairs subsidiary, Celtic Horizons. It previously involved face-to-face interactions to:

- Hold viewings, where prospective tenants were shown available properties
- Hold meetings to discuss tenant needs; tenancy agreements; general tenancy information and answer any questions
- Handovers to provide keys and utility briefings

To transform the process into a digital experience, we needed to quickly roll out a programme of staff training for using new and different systems.

For the new process, we:

- Trained staff in how to create effective films on mobile phones to start 'virtual' viewings through a new, designated YouTube channel. This meant virtual show-rounds and utility briefings could be sent to tenants to view homes, rather than visit the property
- Created secure, digital tenancy agreements, sent via email with provision for multiple digital signatures for tenants and Neighbourhood Officers
- Designed virtual sign-ups through video calls to give new tenants the opportunity to have more information and ask questions
- Fit Keysafe entries to properties with unique key codes for tenants to access their new home. These will be kept on site for families to use in future.

Since we introduced digital lettings in May, we have seen brilliant outcomes. 160 virtual viewing videos have been produced (including property types rather than films for every home), and over 200 lettings have been completed digitally.

Our customers have been overwhelmingly positive about the experience overall, pleased to have done viewings and completed the sign-up process from the safety of home:

- "The sign up was very easy and went through lovely. We were very surprised at how well it went."
- "It was all positive and nothing to improve on."

The greatest benefit has been the opportunity to keep our customers safe during the pandemic, and while we recognise that not all prospective tenants have had the technology to fulfil a digital process with us, the exceptions with conducting physical lettings have been fewer than 5%.

The digital process has also created resource efficiencies, taking less than half the time spent on lettings previously, with a reduction in our carbon footprint through less travel too.

To further improve the process, our IT team are currently developing a self-service applicant portal for prospective tenants to answer pre-tenancy questions at a time and pace that suits them. When they start their tenancy, this portal will transform into their tenant app account, setting them up for digital engagement with United Welsh for rent enquiries, repairs and other transactions in future.

Outcomes and achievements

For thousands of prospective tenants across Wales, lettings are the first part of their customer journey with a registered social landlord.

To provide excellent customer service to new tenants and Local Authority partners, United Welsh quickly transformed their lettings process into a digital experience, supporting people to move in a way that protected their health and safety during the coronavirus pandemic.

Through staff training and using technology well, United Welsh has completed over 160 virtual viewings and over 200 digital lettings and re-lets since May 2020.

Feedback from customers has been great too:

- "The sign up was very easy and went through lovely. We were very surprised at how well it went."
- "It was all positive and nothing to improve on."

United Welsh now has a development pipeline to positively build on the digital lettings experience.

The IT team are creating a self-service applicant portal for prospective tenants to answer pre-tenancy questions at a time and pace that suits them, and when they start their tenancy, this portal will transform into their tenant app account. This means United Welsh tenants are set up ready for digital engagement with the business in future and can continue to receive an excellent tenancy service in a simple way.

Customer excellence project

Adra



Statement of support

Adra focuses on identifying hard to reach and disadvantaged groups and has developed its Customer Services in response to specific need; homelessness support - Adra secured funding for new build supported accommodation at its latest development in Bangor and is working with Shelter Cymru to support the housing first model, providing high level support to homeless people to maintain their tenancies. Adra has made positive changes to services as a result of analysing customer experience, improving customer journeys; at the start of the pandemic, it was recognised that customers could be impacted by higher levels of bereavement, so Adra adapted procedures and secured further bereavement training for its team. Coinciding with Apprenticeship Week in Wales in February 2021, Adra launched its new Academi, supporting more than 60 young people to develop new skills and access work opportunities with partners, including Procure Plus and local SME contractors, across North Wales by 2022. Adra has improved the range and quality of information available for customers; during May 2021, Adra launched its new tailored website for customers Cymuned Adra, where stories can be shared, including information and opportunities from Adra and partners encouraging customers to take advantage of skills and employability, health and well-being opportunities. Adra has more than 14,000 customers; more than 90% of Adra's customer contact is via it's Contact Centre; its number one priority is to resolve enquiries and solve problems at the first point of contact.

Adra has two new Housing Apprentices as part of its Academi, both of whom are Adra tenants. One of the apprentices, Lauren Jones, of Caernarfon, said: "I used to work for the health service, and the hours were long and not very friendly for family life. I got a text from Adra saying 'Come work for us' and I immediately filled in the form! I was really interested in the work Adra does around tenant support, but through this apprenticeship I also got the opportunity to learn about all the other services they have. Learning, gaining experience and gaining a qualification in the process was too good an opportunity to miss." Elin Williams, Community and Partnerships Manager - Adra, added: "As we grow, we want to create opportunities for our people, starting with our customers. Through Academi Adra, we are creating work opportunities via our placement schemes and wider trainee, graduate and apprentice programmes, working with our partners and targeting our customers across North Wales who are facing so many challenges to access the job market." In June 2021, Customer Service Excellence Assessor Hugh Keachie, said: "Adra has consistently demonstrated excellent levels of Customer Service. Adra is an organisation that is very good at thinking outside the box, and has been well served during the pandemic by this culture. They are creating really great opportunities for their customers and there is a clear desire from staff to deliver quality services. It was a real positive to hear from staff how they felt valued, appreciated and empowered to get things done." Sarah Schofield, Director of Customers and Communities - Adra, added: "Our customers are at the centre of everything we do and our staff are determined to deliver great services that keep customers safe and comfortable in their own homes. It's encouraging to have recognition for the work we do and such positive feedback. "Customers are respected, valued and listened to and have a right to expect excellence in everything we do. We know we can always improve and are open to comments and ideas. As an organisation, we look forward to developing further and to develop even better services for our customers."

Outcomes and achievements

Adra was awarded Customer Service Excellence Accreditation for the third year running in June 2021, gaining four new Compliance Plus ratings for establishing its new Bereavement team, launching Academi Adra, developing its new tenant website and homelessness support packages. Adra is supporting 60 young people to develop new skills and work opportunities via its Academi by 2022. Adra's Neighbourhood Services team made 2,000 calls to vulnerable residents impacted by COVID. Adra works with Mustard Research which analyses Adra's Tenant Satisfaction Questionnaire results; customer satisfaction for Adra's handling of the pandemic

increased from 78% in early 2020 to 89% by Spring 2021. HouseMark's STAR survey also showed that customer levels of trustworthiness had increased from 87% in 2017 to 93% by the end of 2020. Adra was shortlisted for the Welsh Contact Centre Awards; during 2019-20, 84% of calls were answered within an average time of 35 seconds, with this improving to 96% of calls answered within 20 seconds for 2020-21. For 2020/21, Adra's Contact Centre has received 78,000 phone calls, 3,200 emails and 3,800 letters. Overall customer satisfaction levels have increased throughout 2020/21 from 90% to 96%.

EXCELLENCE IN HEALTH AND WELLBEING

This award is for organisations who have demonstrated excellence in their approach to the health and wellbeing of staff and / or residents over the past year.

Health & Wellbeing driving cultural change

ClwydAlyn



Statement of support

Our corporate plan sets out our ambition: 'Together to beat poverty!'. Our ambition can only be achieved by promoting and supporting positive physical and mental health.

A Health and Wellbeing group (The HWB) has been formed with staff volunteers who have introduced some fantastic health and wellbeing interventions:

- Mental health first aid training.
- The HWB intranet page and app has been created where all staff can access health and wellbeing resources.
- Menopause support group.
- A parenting networking group.

Our workplace wellbeing specialist joined in April who will support our key ambition to become the first Trauma and Adverse Childhood Experience informed housing association in North Wales. Our aim is to reduce childhood adversity, support vulnerable adults who may have experienced trauma and encourage resilience and protective factors within communities.

We have established a proactive group that reviews the incidents of violence reported where lessons learned are identified and changes are made to improve practises. This also provides person-centred immediate support based upon their needs and the incident itself.

COVID-19 has enabled us to accelerate our plans to offer flexibility to staff around how, when and where they work. This is important to us, because we understand the more flexible we are, the better the service we can provide, and the happier our people will be.

We have found this approach allows greater flexibility in our services; our homeless services are already enjoying the benefits with staff working different shift patterns, which suit them and our residents better. Our trades team can choose to work weekends and have time off in the week. Staff feel more confident to ask for support when personal issues arise, rather than phoning in sick.

When working flexibly - trust is key. We do not believe time is an effective way to manage performance, we'd rather measure the value of work that is being done. We believe this is making us a distinctive business - enabling us to recruit the right people, improve staff wellbeing, be agile for our partners and provide the best service for our customers.

Kirsty, Project Worker: "I was interested in pursuing a different career, but I loved my zero hours job at ClwydAlyn and wanted to continue part-time. I approached HR and they offered me an annualised hours contract. It means I can do shifts that fit around my children and busy schedule, but I've got a guaranteed wage every month and peace of mind. For ClwydAlyn, they retain my skills and knowledge in the business."

Our wellbeing approach supports our residents too. We are committed to zero evictions; we have switched from being procedural to supportive by encouraging conversations rather than formal actions. We have reduced evictions by 87% with no evictions into homelessness. Our staff take part in wellbeing calls, spending half a day every month on the phone to residents

Mrs Bartlett was at the point of eviction, concealing debt from her family and was over £4k in arrears. She is now in credit with her rent, and has managed to control her gambling addiction:

"This time last year I was in large arrears both in my rent and bills. I thought I would lose everything. I kept the problem to myself, was falling sick with anxiety whenever someone called at the door or my phone. But with the help of ClwydAlyn, their team has worked with me to completely turn my life around. I am now free of any debts and can live comfortably in my house. I couldn't be happier, I now live positively without a cloud of debt over my head."

Outcomes and achievements

Our employees completed a health and wellbeing survey which showed the link between positive mental health and having someone at work to talk to. In response, we've rolled out "somebuddy to talk to initiative" within our maintenance team where staff have a nominated person they can check in with. We have introduced Wellness Action Plans (Mind), to support managers with mental health conversations.

Our new approach is already seeing early indications of an overall reduction in sickness absence and our staff turnover has reduced by 39%.

Our Health & Wellbeing Survey during Covid also showed:

- 93% of our workforce said they are happy at work
- 92% thought their line manager took their health/wellbeing seriously
- 89% felt they had someone they can talk to in the workplace

We've also:

- Developed two new support roles, (Wellbeing and Inclusion and Employability Specialists).
- Trained 77 Mental Health First Aiders.
- Offer private counselling (via Medra) to all employees, who can self-refer.
- Introduced 'Neyber' offering staff guidance and support on money matters.
- Financially rewarded staff who worked in our critical key worker services during covid, including volunteers.
- Made 4,164 wellbeing calls to residents - offering tailored support & delivered over 200 wellbeing gift packs.

Coastal Hub and Yard

Coastal Housing



Statement of support

In early response to the coronavirus emergency, Coastal moved office-based staff to homeworking on 17th March, one week before UK government issued national lockdown.

Up to this point, Coastal had modelled itself as a 'relational' organization, trying to blur the boundaries between departments and encouraging collaboration. Coastal's offices had adopted a fully open-plan, hot desk arrangement long before the pandemic struck. Although Coastal had moved to cloud-based IT systems a year previously (thus easing a shift to off-site working), many staff found it difficult to work from home all day, every day for such an extended period and missed the companionship and support of colleagues.

Throughout the first year of the emergency, Coastal's management team encouraged feedback about staff experiences, with a particular focus on wellbeing. Regular wellbeing polling of more than 40% of the workforce mapped trends over time and a comprehensive programme of Coastal Conversations between every member of staff and their line manager, dug deeper on an individual level, capturing what people were learning about themselves and their work through an enforced period of homeworking.

Many people shared openly the difficulties they were facing, both personally and professionally. Whilst it emerged most staff would like to continue to work from home in future at least some of the time, many missed the structure and support of working together in a physical space and longed to spend time with colleagues again once safe to do so. The impact of long-term remote working on creativity and collaboration was frequently cited by staff and of particular concern to management, as these are cornerstones of the Coastal way of working.

In planning a partial return to office working from July 2021, it was clear the limited space available from a reconfigured office would be insufficient to meet demand. In response, Coastal's management team decided to create a dedicated outside working and collaboration space which offers a safe, well-ventilated alternative to the office throughout the summer months and potentially beyond.

In Spring 2021, Coastal's Facilities and Estates teams built benches and planters in a courtyard area at its Urban Village headquarters, creating the Coastal Yard. The benches are limited in numbers for social distancing and have QR codes for digital check-in to fulfill Track and Trace requirements and log who's using the space at what times, in order to improve experience and better meet staff needs.

In addition to the Yard, an adjacent vacant commercial area was repurposed to create socially-distanced inside working space, with effective through-ventilation possible on two sides of the space. This is now known as the Coastal Hub and operates similar Covid-safe processes with the addition of mask-wearing when moving around indoors.

Creation of the Hub and Yard has only been possible due to management's vision, investment in staff wellbeing and Coastal's unique positioning. Because of its significant regeneration investment, the space in the Urban Village, wholly owned by Coastal, was able to be re-purposed to meet staff need. The offices had been designed with open spaces over a decade ago, and this paid dividends when it became possible to create the Coastal Hub and Yard.

The Yard will soon be upgraded for all-weather working with awnings and external heaters, even as Coastal prepares to increase the numbers able to work from its main offices. Feedback was extremely positive from members of staff who used the facility in its first couple of weeks. Whilst people are craving in-person work interaction, this facility allows Coastal to meet a demonstrable demand in support of staff mental health, and facilitating collaboration in a Covid-safe environment.

Outcomes and achievements

- Check-in system recorded 75 individual visits in the first 5 days of opening.
- Arrangements with local coffee shops for Coastal staff to obtain hot beverages to be charged back to Coastal, helping to support local businesses whilst coronavirus restrictions placed staff kitchens out of action .
- Ca. 1,300ft2 of outdoor space repurposed for drop-in sessions.
- Ca. 2,500ft2 of indoor café space repurposed with Wi-Fi, power points, toilets and drinking water for socially-distanced working.

- Staff feedback is universally positive:

"It was lovely there! It's was so nice seeing people in real life! Really enjoyed and lovely seeing the team together again.";

"I think I was as, or more, productive sitting in the Hub as I am at home! It's a great facility and I hope we can keep it for a long time.";

"Was lovely to be there today with the SNE Team, thank you to all involved for getting this space ready.";

"What a lovely afternoon seeing everyone!"

Zest

Melin Homes



Statement of support

Melin are passionate about their Zest health and wellbeing project for staff, residents and community partners and have wellbeing at the heart of everything we do. Staff Over the years we have supported our staff team to become more active, stop smoking, eat healthily, reduce stress and anxiety and most of all have fun. We have successfully reduced our sickness rate, improved staff engagement and increased staff satisfaction levels, resulting in number 6 in the Housing sector's 25 Best Associations to work for in the UK, and number 1 ranked housing association in Wales. This year, we adapted the way Zest operates by increasing wellbeing emails, held virtual catch up's to aid mental health, provided anxiety workshops, free exercise classes, online singing classes, counselling, mindfulness sessions, laughter classes, free membership to the mindfulness app Headspace. We enhanced our reward initiative, Diolch, to help staff thank and recognise each other and we saw nominations tripling through the pandemic. It demonstrated the impact a thank you can have on mental health and staff got to choose from a donation to our charity of the year, trees planted in their name or a box of chocolates. We encouraged our teams to meet up in the park and even arranged team dog

walks to aid mental health, reduce isolation and improve our Melin support structure. We consistently said Thank You to ensure our staff felt valued and even sent out thank you packs to every member of staff to make sure we maintained the personal touch. One staff member said "I can't believe how much wellbeing support Melin have provided to keep me going, both physically and mentally. You can really tell that wellbeing is at the heart of everything they do, thank you Melin. You are life saviour" Residents We have always taken our residents health and wellbeing seriously, this year has meant we have done even more to ensure residents know we are there for them. Some of things we have done have included:

- Campaign - Here for you, letting resident know how we could support them
- Welfare calls to all vulnerable residents and 'keeping in touch' calls to all other residents to prevent isolation
- We worked with Local Authority hubs to help provide food parcels to vulnerable residents
- Our partnership with Gwent Dragons Rugby enabled us to use their delivery services for residents who were shielding
- Our Care and Repair agency delivered medicines to those in need
- We provided regular updates on social media from Zest, to support physical and mental health
- The regular contact with residents by Scheme Managers and our tenancy support service has helped tackle loneliness and isolation by providing a friendly and supportive service throughout a difficult and challenging time.
- We are part of the Period Poverty Campaign in Newport and have provided sanitary products to those who can't afford them

- We have spent over £1k to provide activities to Sheltered scheme residents who feel isolated.
- Zest has given residents in every scheme a well-being treat such as hampers or fish & chips Here are a couple of personal residents stories: A resident called to let us know that money advisor Leslie had helped him to gain discretionary housing benefit of £500. The resident said: " I just wanted to say thank you so much I can't believe

I've been accepted you have really taken a lot of stress off my shoulders I am very grateful." One of our staff spoke to a lady one Friday afternoon who had no money or food until the following week. Food banks were closed, so on Saturday morning our staff member went to her home with Tesco vouchers. Both she and her husband were incredibly grateful.

Outcomes and achievements

Staff 260 thank you gifts and we gave staff an extra days leave for all their hard work this year. "The most wonderful gift from the most wonderful employer." We made our flexi policy even more flexible "I am very grateful for the flexible working hours, it allows me to fit work around my other responsibilities. Thank you for thinking of my wellbeing." 100% of staff said it contributed to improvements in their work life balance. Laughtercise - "It's just so silly, just what I needed." Pilates - "Thank you Zest for the Pilates classes they help me relax and have helped with my posture." Anxiety workshops - "It was

absolutely brilliant! Very informative for personal and professional life." Residents We made 9,000 calls and sent 8,000 publications to support and advise residents during the crisis. Given out £21,470 of supermarket vouchers, accessed £7196 of energy vouchers for tenants and generated £59,800.61 in financial gains from our energy advice. Generated £2,782,010.20 in grants and welfare benefit claims / appeals.

We provided puzzles, puzzle books, adult colouring books and crayons to Sheltered scheme residents who felt isolate.

Newport City Council and Melin Homes – holistic approaches to move on accommodation

Lead organisation: Newport City Council

Partner organisation: Melin Homes



Statement of support

The pandemic has placed unprecedented pressures on housing and homelessness services. The increase in households to whom the local authority owed a homelessness duty, coupled with the almost complete cessation of lettings by both social and private landlords at certain times has led to an increased demand for both temporary accommodation, and long-term housing that allows people to move on from temporary and supported housing. One way that Newport City Council has sought to address this need is by working with their Registered Social

Landlord partners to identify developments that could be brought forward quickly to meet this need. Ty Pill is a development of 8 flats, including a wheelchair accessible property, by Melin Homes, in conjunction with their partnering contractors LCB and Your Space Projects, in the Pillgwenlly area of Newport. The original intention was for these properties to be let through the local authority managed common housing register. As the units were due to complete in March 2021, Melin Homes agreed to work in partnership with Newport City Council to ensure that units at Ty Pill were helping to address the significant pressures that COVID had placed on the local authority. Rather than the properties being allocated through the common housing register where any eligible household can bid on them, an innovative panel approach was agreed.

By enabling people to make successful transitions from temporary and supported accommodation, Ty Pill provides much needed accommodation whereby future vacancies can be targeted at individuals who need them most. Supporting people to live independently and manage their own tenancies also significantly reduces the likelihood of people becoming homeless in the future and needing to access temporary accommodation again.

Newport City Council and Melin Homes are continuing to work in partnership to support people into long-term, permanent accommodation. A successful bid

for Social Housing Grant slippage funding was made in 2020/21 that will allow Melin Homes to develop 9 flats in another area of the city. Given the success of Ty Pill, these will be allocated in the same way, enabling more homeless households to make a planned and sustainable move from temporary accommodation.

Outcomes and achievements

The holistic panel approach to letting properties involved representatives from the local authority Housing Needs Team, Supporting People, Melin Homes, Police and support providers. The panel allocated properties to people who were ready to move on from temporary or supported accommodation. This allowed for applications to be discussed in detail and issues such as support needs and compatibility with other residents to be considered.

All residents of Ty Pill are provided with floating support to help them sustain their tenancies. For some residents Ty Pill is their first tenancy, whereas others have previously lived independently but currently require support to maintain their accommodation. Without the floating support provided at Ty Pill there would be a risk that many of these tenancies would fail, leading to a cycle of homelessness. The floating support at Ty Pill also supports residents to engage with more specialist services.

Vision Friends

Lead organisation: Royal National Institute of Blind People Cymru

Partner organisation: Cardiff Council and Trivallis



Statement of support

Funded by the Welsh Government, Vision Friends (VF) is a new early sight loss intervention and prevention model through training delivery. Designed to create a network of 150 VF across Wales based in sheltered and supported community housing settings, and residential homes.

One in 5 adults over the age of 75 are living with sight loss. A third of people with dementia experience sight loss but due to diagnostic overshadowing it is often missed. The training provides VF with the knowledge and skills to identify and recognise people with hidden sight loss.

Fifty percent of sight loss can be prevented through promotion and referral to local eye health services. By applying these new skills and knowledge VF can empower residents with sight loss to access the appropriate eye health services, make practical

changes to their everyday tasks and stay independent within their own homes.

Cardiff Council and Trivallis housing association, partners with RNIB, were asked to collaborate in content design. Their input was vital ensuring the training and the tool kit contained essential information to support VF and dovetail into the role of housing staff.

Focus groups were undertaken with residents and with people with sight loss. Through their lived experience, their contribution ensured resources within the tool kit would support residents to continue to live well and independently within their current housing provision.

RNIB's VF training project offers an understanding of the needs of older people with sight loss through 4 modules:

- Understanding Sight loss
- Identifying sight loss -
- Accessing Eye Care services
- Creating Inclusive Environments using use of colour and tonal contrast and lighting to reduce the impact of sight loss.

Training is delivered online in five one-hour sessions. It has been carefully tailored, to increase wellbeing, and empower older people to be more independent. The training also offers an understanding of how small changes can improve care and support.

Learning is cemented through pre and post activities within the toolkit. VF have access to a SharePoint site with additional resources and bimonthly forum meetings with speakers.

Its partners at Trivallis and Cardiff Council have witnessed how Vision Friends is making a tangible difference to the daily lives of older people with sight loss in Wales

In applying training into practice, staff have reported they now have better awareness of Charles Bonnet Syndrome. Tenants can fear talking about the condition and become isolated and lonely. As a result of training, VF have supported four tenants to access appropriate services for diagnosis and support.

VF have signposted residents to Wales Low Vision Service to access free prescribed magnifiers to enable activities such as reading and knitting. Residents have been supported to use accessible features on tablets to overcome difficulties arising from sight loss which prevented use and access to social media. The continuation of daily living activities is one of the results of the training.

VF have had the confidence to discuss sight loss and services available. As a result, residents have attended "living well with sight loss" courses and have gone on to join RNIB Connector social groups. Overcoming social isolation and inspiring them to live life to the full. Pam a Cardiff council tenant said "They explained an awful lot of things that I was totally unaware of which was so helpful and I think we should all be aware."

Asmut Price from Cardiff Council said: "I found the training really useful. There was lots of engagement from the team and the trainers. The trainers were very knowledgeable. The team have been able to use their knowledge to help and support residents living within Cardiff Council's Community Living scheme."

Outcomes and achievements

A fundamental achievement was to overcome the barriers due to Covid 19. No longer could face to face training meetings and services occur. The project used alternative online methods.

Achievements include:

- Holding focus group events with residents and people with sight loss.
- Creation of online Vision Friends Training Tool kit and External SharePoint
- 90 housing staff trained
- Bimonthly VF forums to share practice and ideas
- Reassuring patients to access healthcare during covid.
- Keen engagement from further organisations
- Ongoing commitment to develop staff and support people with sight loss during covid.
- Organisations committed to train the trainer to spread the knowledge throughout tenants and staff to create sustainability.

Evaluation findings

The VF training model is evaluated by an external evaluator.

Interim findings found Vision Friends are :

- more confident in understanding the signs of sight loss
- more able to understand how sight loss impacts on wellbeing
- more confident in suggesting improvements and adaptations to living environments
- more confident seeking support from eye services.

Feedback from participants

Christopher Thomas, Safeguarding and Service Standards Coordinator for Trivallis said: "The training was comprehensive and enlightening and has given our team the essential skills and insight needed to best support our tenants with sight loss."

WELL@WORK

Tai Tarian



Statement of support

Promoting Employee Wellbeing through the Pandemic

Tai Tarian is a Platinum Corporate Health Standard Award Holder with an established wellbeing strategy called “Well@Work” but realised at the start of the pandemic that there was an urgent need to think differently to protect employees.

This has been addressed in three phases:

- 1) Initial Response
- 2) Winter Wellbeing Plan
- 3) Ongoing Learning and Collaboration.

1). Initial Response

Key actions which were either initiated specifically or brought forward in response to the pandemic:-

- An urgent review of all colleagues who needed to be prioritised for support owing to potential medical vulnerability.
- A new learning platform was implemented from April 2020 which gave access to remote learning for all staff, up from 34% previously. It was evaluated as the best implementation that the system supplier had ever worked on.
- A development programme “Managing Your Wellbeing in Difficult times” was co-designed with a specialist provider and delivered to colleagues as a live virtual event.
- Enabled an entirely flexible approach to working from home to support colleagues to manage their domestic circumstances.
- Surveys conducted to evaluate colleagues’ experience of working from home and their wellbeing. Independent professional support was provided to those who reported that their mental health had been impacted.
- An external expert was retained to carry out wellbeing support calls to our colleagues who had themselves been making outgoing support calls to tenants

- Identified the i-act programme as a long term response to improving colleague wellbeing and trained by an internal facilitator
- The Senior Team led the communication of a new 5 year Corporate Plan in September 2020, presented virtually with 87% of employees attending. All employees were sent a pack to their home with information and gifts ready for the launch
- Our EAP and confidential dialogue tool “Work in Confidence” were actively promoted.

2). Winter Wellbeing

As the pandemic increased in intensity as winter approached it was felt that a crisis response was required, so a specific “Winter Wellness Plan” was established and communicated.

- A “More for your Mind” animation was created and shown to all colleagues to explain our 5 step plan
- The Executive Directors were trained in i-act wellbeing framework by our internal lead Kelly Mordecai.
- Mental Health First Aiders established
- Our Head of OD Wayne Gwilym ran virtual Wellbeing Discussion Groups at breakfast and lunchtimes to support colleagues and to reinforce our Winter Wellbeing plan
- Manager and employee i-act training sessions were initiated
- Wellbeing Buddies established and colleagues encouraged to take a daily Wellbeing Window.
- A resilience seminar and free personal resilience evaluation was launched to all colleagues to highlighting how their individual habits and behaviours help or hinder their resilience.
- Limits on meeting times for managers and executives were established to attempt to limit burnout risk, with no meetings allowed between 12:00 and 14:00 or after 16:00
- A further survey was conducted in December to evaluate changes in sentiment from July.

3). Ongoing Learning and Collaboration

Having decided that Tai Tarian would embrace hybrid working permanently, the organisation has built on the learning from phases one and two to create an ongoing learning and collaboration environment to build toward the future with wellbeing as the key priority.

- Established a “Future of Work” group with representation from across the organisation including the workplace Union to co-develop concepts and ideas
- Invested heavily in i-act training, having trained 229 people with a further 52 already enrolled on forthcoming events, which is half of our workforce.

- Conducted regular focus group events to engage colleagues in wellbeing discussions and seek ideas and insight into how to develop appropriate responses to hybrid working.

Outcomes and achievements

Many outcomes following the investment in Wellbeing during the pandemic include:-

- Home Working Survey showed 90% of staff effectively work from home with 83% having a positive experience.
- 28 employees supported by “Work Wellness” where wellbeing had deteriorated.
- Our interventions improved mental health outcomes in December compared to July 2020, despite the worsening situation. Respondents whose mental health had been impacted reduced to 14.6% from 18.4%.
- Our internal i-act training has been rated excellent or very good by 96% of attendees.

An extract is provided below from the testimonial provided by our recognised Trade Union, Unite:

The organisations response.....showed a genuine

commitment to employee welfare ...issues around mental health were given proper and relevant consideration with a genuine desire in assisting employees through a difficult time.

The following are some extracts from feedback received in Spring 2021 from the Gold and Platinum Corporate Health Standard Revalidation by Public Health Wales.:

- “Impressed by how much you have adapted the new ways of working”;
- “Emphasis on developing staff to meet the challenges that this new way of working has brought”;
- “Particularly impressed with recognising the challenges to people’s mental health in working from home and the many initiatives to help them.

HWB Dinbych Arts for health social prescribing project

Grŵp Cynefin



Statement of support

HWB Dinbych’s Social Prescribing Art for Health Project started in January 2019 with a main focus on improving individual’s health and well-being. The project receives referrals from GP’s, mental health agencies, local organisations and self-referrals. In March 2020, 4 groups were running weekly with the support of 2 tutors - 3 art groups and 1 sewing group.

In mid-March HWB Dinbych had to close its doors due to Covid-19, it was decided immediately to form a support network for all participants who attended the social prescribing project, these individuals are all extremely vulnerable and many are very isolated.

Between March and May participants received a weekly well-being call. These phone calls were an opportunity to hear a friendly voice, share their worries and get support and referrals to relevant community support groups/food supplies.

Since running the Art for Health in HWB Dinbych the benefit that art and creativity can have on people’s wellbeing and mental health was incredible, whilst also supporting people’s wellbeing. In June we made the decision to provide the participants with their own art packs and the project became ‘Art for Health online’.

30 individuals received packs with 8 weeks of art supplies, equipment, weekly tasks and guidance (all of which was simple images) Enclosed was an easy-to-follow lesson plan for each week which would develop skills in different art techniques, such as watercolour painting, printing, drawing and many more.

A Facebook group was also set up as an online community for all participants to share ideas, pictures and talk about not only their artwork but to catch up with each other too. Many commented that as a result they didn’t feel alone, and that having people comment on their pictures gave them a confidence boost.

Every Friday for 8 weeks, 3 Zoom meetings were arranged with the tutors so that participants could have a chat and get guidance about their weekly art

task as well as chat about how they were feeling and any worries they might have. For those who were not active on social media or able to join the Zooms, they continued to receive a phone call.

In September it was possible to re-open HWB Dinbych whilst keeping everyone safe - introducing a one-way system throughout the building, posters reminding everyone to social distance and wear masks, cleaning facilities available in entrances and exits and in all rooms. A short video was also published to show these changes prior to participants returning.

There was a massive demand to restart the face-to-face groups. Staff were unsure how participants would feel with them potentially feeling nervous and anxious about returning after so long, but straight away the attendance was really high.

In the past, HWB Dinbych had held art exhibitions to display the work that has been created in the Art for Health Social prescribing groups. This year we had to do things a little different. The art work was displayed in the windows at HWB Dinbych for 2 weeks. These were promoted on social media for people to come and have a look, a lot of people were seen viewing this work and extremely impressed with the work they saw.

Since returning to face to face groups in HWB Dinbych we have continued to offer weekly zoom calls or wellbeing phone calls to the individuals that are still not comfortable in returning.

More sessions have now been added to the social prescribing project, including a weekly walking group, sewing 'drop-ins' and an additional art group. The uptake on the new projects has been great, and we really look forward to developing the project further.

Outcomes and achievements

The need for a project such as Arts for Health is huge and the sessions are extremely beneficial to our most vulnerable individuals within society, this project has made such a difference to the participants. During the first lockdown some participants noted they felt they didn't have a purpose to get up in the morning but since returning their mental health has improved so much!

Ben who received a weekly phone call said:

"it helped me get through lockdown, it was something to look forward to and it was sometimes the only person I spoke to in a week".

These are some of the comments we received about the wellbeing calls and art packs:

"Brilliant, couldn't have done without the art. Helped me a lot."

"Absolutely brilliant, made such a difference, something to focus on. See each other on zoom made a big difference."

"Phone calls were good, put me up in a good mood and was looking forward to it, glad I'm back"

"Really helped, gave me Initiative to do something, enjoyed the zoom as it was a chance to chat with someone. Helped a lot, without the packs I wouldn't have anything to do."

HAPI (Healthy, Aspiring, Prosperous and Inclusive)

Newydd Housing Association



Statement of support

As a result of the Covid-19 Pandemic and being the first local project to deliver online through various platforms HAPI now has a wider ranging audience, it is not only assisting tenants with their general wellbeing but also residents across Wales and further a field such as Australia and Canada, this project is truly one of a kind.

HAPI engages with its participants through asking questions in the comments box during LIVE and pre recorded activities. Engagement includes general comments about the activities and liking other comments made within the post. HAPI's peak engagement was over 15k during this year.

More locally HAPI has provided an 8-week virtual cook a long course with Hawthorn High School as an after-school activity, whereby HAPI provided the ingredients each week to participants to cook during the session. Feedback from this activity has been that all participants reported improved confidence and 100% reported that their knowledge of food and nutrition and cooking skills had improved as a result of this activity.

HAPI Employability

In July HAPI purchased an on-line training suite and offered the following accredited courses - allergen awareness; level 2 food hygiene; paediatric first aid; Covid-19 essentials; PPE for healthcare; manual handling; asbestos awareness; level 1 health and safety and working at heights. During this reporting period 117 individual learners completed a total of 200 courses. Most of the learners came from our Facebook page however we received several referrals from Newydd Housing Officers, Communities for Work+ and the local Job Centers. Some of the comments received included:

*They were excellent thank you

*I'm really enjoying them its nice to do them at your own pace especially being a stay at home mum

*Really enjoyed it great course and full of content

Periodically HAPI have engaged with its participants through Facebook Poll's to ensure that they are delivering activities that tenants and residents want and to enable the project to meet the needs of its participants. Below are the results from April 2020's poll which highlights that from those who completed the poll 100% reported an improvement of their wellbeing as a result of HAPI's online activities.

Have you taken part in any of our Facebook activities?
Yes - 30 answers

What activities have you taken part in?

30 answers - 43 votes

Pilates with Mel - 21 votes

Sing along with Steve -11 votes

Family fitness with Craig 4 votes

Cook a long with Richard - 2 votes

Chorus Club with Amy Jenkins -2 votes

Improve your singing voice with Amy Jenkins -2 votes

Rockatots - 1 vote

How often do you take part?

Daily - 23.3%

5 times a week = 10.0%

2-3 times a week - 26.7%

3-4 times a week = 20.0%

1-2 times a week = 20.0%

Has our activities improved your wellbeing?

Yes = 30 votes 100%

Are any other activities you would like to take part in through our Facebook page.

Exercise

More sing alongs

No, nice variety of activities

HIIT sessions. Cook alongs

Adult crafts would be nice, learn to knit, crochet, draw etc...

Not at present

Below are some of the comments made from a poll that was conducted in the summer of 2020, and it provides more detail in terms of participants experience of the online delivery:

*It has been excellent and really helpful during lockdown.

*Your courses has helped filled a gap during lockdown and have been entertaining.

*Great to keep some sense of connection and structure

*Craig's fitness has helped so much during lockdown both mentally and physically.

*Abs fab activities and courses really enjoyed.

Outcomes and achievements

Newydd's Time to Change staff group went over and above to ensure staff looked after their physical and mental wellbeing during the pandemic. Useful tips were posted on the intranet; virtual coffee mornings, social gatherings and informal chats using Teams were facilitated; wellbeing webinars were promoted; online battleship competitions arranged; and online classes were coordinated including exercise classes, mindfulness and anxiety management.

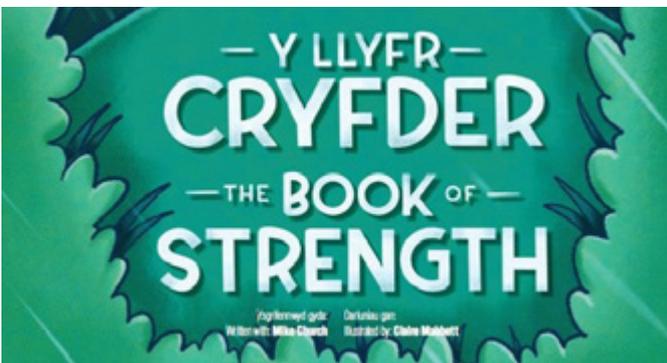
HAPI, Newydd's amazing lottery funded health and wellbeing project, also immediately moved all their activities online <https://www.facebook.com/hapiRCT> which proved hugely successful and far reaching. Tutors were employed to deliver various sessions using Facebook/Houseparty such as hair, beauty and make-up tutorials; singalongs; magic;

cookalongs; physical activities for all ages and abilities; stress management; mindfulness; circus skills; holistic therapies; crafts and gardening - here is a summary video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yDtr9Vp3VEs>

HAPI found that by delivering activities online, they not only reached more tenants and residents in their delivery area (RCT) but also a wider geographical audience. Between Feb and August their online Facebook presence grew from 1468 to 3574 page likes. 196.6k minutes were spent viewing activities with 202.6k second video views. From the wellbeing training opportunities provided, 28 new participants completed courses and reported an improvement in their emotional wellbeing.

The Book of Strength

Pobl Group



Statement of support

Pobl have been working alongside partners, The Parent Network and PETRA Publishing, Aneurin Bevan Health Board and the Gwent Psychology Team and Pobl Tenants to create a wonderful children's book.

The book has been written by a group of families who have drawn their experiences of supporting their children during this difficult time. They shared their worries, fears, highs and lows, and have created a book which communicates important, positive and affirming messages to children. It focuses on strength and resilience and how experiences, good and bad, are all part of a journey that makes us who we are.

The Coronavirus pandemic has swept across the world and changed lives beyond recognition for many children and families. As we begin to return from

lockdown, we are also coming to terms with our 'new normal' and trying to make sense of the recent events. While this involves reflecting on what has been an extremely difficult and challenging time, there have also been experiences of solidarity, strength and appreciation. New relationships have formed, and existing ones strengthened; feelings of appreciation of small, everyday things have grown; and recognising strength in ourselves and discovering new support networks has led to a sense, for some, of a new found togetherness and reassurance. This collective approach is fundamental in going forward for people and communities post COVID. Community Foundation Wales has recognised this project and supported us to fund 1000 copies.

Storytelling is a powerful medium to explore thoughts, feelings and emotions by capturing the imagination in a safe, fun and thought-provoking way in a narrative that is easily accessible and enjoyable. The purpose of this book is to provide families and professionals with a resource that can be used to talk with children about challenges in their lives, both past, present and future.

It can support parents and professional to facilitate these sorts of conversations with children for better understanding of the importance of resilience in the face of adversity and the impact it can have on our sense of wellbeing.

The Book of Strength introduces the idea that our mental health and resilience are determined by what circumstances we live in. It is hoped it can help

children and the grown-ups around them understand that we need to create the right condition for everyone to be able to thrive. To find the solutions and create a nurturing world we need to look at the story of our lives and ask ourselves how we ensure our emotional needs are met.

What started as a small project to engage isolated families has turned into a full time project helping communities across South and West Wales. With further plans to develop community activities trails

around the book, live library story sessions, further school workshops, parent led mental health support groups, supplying copies to local food banks/refuges we are looking at a second printing next year so we can continue to respond to the crisis that has left a lasting mark on our mental health and emotional wellbeing.

<https://www.poblgroup.co.uk/about-us/pobl-story/october-2020/the-book-of-strength/>

<https://www.petrapublishing.org/>

Outcomes and achievements

The Book of Strength workshops are based on decades of research about how secure relationships can help children grow to be happy and more secure grown-ups. And how grown-ups can benefit too.

Launched in November via Zoom, the response has been phenomenal. The book has been distributed to communities in South Wales, via Community Groups, Education, Social Services, Parent Network, Youth Services, Save the Children, Health Services, Libraries. With plans to work with the ACES Hub, Families First, Police and Mental Health Organisations in the New Year.

Pobl have worked with local partners Head4Arts to create craft packs to accompany the book in Christmas eve boxes for families in Caerphilly and have linked with Playdoh to get gift packs sent to families in Newport.

Pobl recently delivered their first online workshop to internal staff which was well received.

They are running a pilot with 8 cluster schools in Newport, who have signed up to use the book as a therapeutic resource within their schools. The first of two workshops have been delivered, focusing on staff wellbeing and psychological first aid to allow staff to support themselves.

Clinical nurse specialist-homeless & vulnerable adults

Abertawe Medical Partnership - Swansea City Health



Statement of support

Janet is the Nurse for Homeless & Vulnerable Adults in Swansea providing a health outreach service to rough sleepers and vulnerable groups. The care of homeless patients in Swansea has been transformed by Janet's hard work and unfaltering dedication to her post over the last 15 years. She has developed and nurtured the service to adapt to the ever changing and challenging needs of this group. She is committed to ensuring her patients' experience of health care is the best it can be in their difficult life circumstances. Janet's work has not only saved the lives of vulnerable people but has

also set them on the path to wellbeing and security by helping restore their trust in services, enabling them to engage with housing and support and advocating for them throughout the process.

As evidence of her dedication to her role, Janet was due to retire in September 2020, however she postponed this due to the COVID19 pandemic, recognising that access to health and wellbeing support would be more important than ever for her vulnerable clients.

She has been an essential part of the response to the pandemic in Swansea, ensuring crucial public health messages are communicated to hard-to-reach groups and giving intelligence on the approaches best used to communicate with and support rough sleepers and other vulnerable groups during this challenging time.

Her role means she engages with third sector organisations daily and provides much valued advice and support to hostel staff and others in the homelessness sector.

"From our rough-sleeper drop-in services to supported accommodation settings - Jan's support to staff and clients is unwavering. Jan goes out of her way to check in with frontline staff regularly, offering advice and guidance, to ensure a rapid response to client health/

wellbeing concerns, easing staff anxiety when dealing with complex situations". Cadi Cliff, Goleudy

Janet's work is delivered in a pro-active, non-judgmental way, which enables her to provide a flexible service and successfully engage with people who would otherwise be extremely hard to reach due to their complex needs and chaotic lifestyles. She has achieved this through:

Providing a service outside normal working hours, early morning breakfast run presence and night shelter work, weekly early evening outreach service at hostels

Training of homelessness staff on health-related conditions

Assistance with accessing health care appropriately with GPs, dentists, opticians, etc

Health interventions e.g. immunisation, wound dressings, smears, blood pressure monitoring, blood tests.

Assessment of substance misuse issues, harm minimisation advice on safer drug and alcohol use

Joint working with agencies such as Housing Options, hospital wards, outpatient departments, discharge liaison teams, hostels and wet houses.

She is a strong advocate for the voices of homeless people and has not been afraid to challenge organisations in the delivery of their services to rough sleepers. She has continually fought to change attitudes and beliefs of others within the NHS, and to promote the effectiveness of trauma informed approaches and flexibility in service delivery to meet the needs of this group of people. She has made the Homelessness Nurse an integral part of services to support homeless people in Swansea, filling the gaps in health care others will not tackle. She has been so successful in her role that other areas in Wales are now looking to replicate the approach e.g. a new post has been created in Neath & Port Talbot to provide the same service and Janet is providing advice and support to establish the new nurse in post. Janet has influenced and touched many lives, patients and colleagues alike. Her work within the service over the last 15 years has been truly inspirational.

Outcomes and achievements

Community Health Council research into experiences of homeless people accessing NHS services found "Homeless people in Swansea spoke highly of services provided by their Nurse for Homeless and Vulnerable. The nurse spent time visiting a range of services run by statutory agencies and the 3rd sector and people told us they could approach her for treatment and help accessing other services such as dentists or GPs."

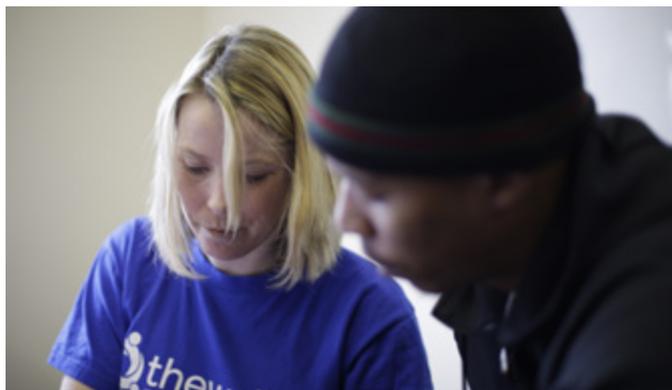
"No one single person has probably had more impact across all homelessness services in Swansea than Jan. She makes a difference to lives, organisations and system change, not just now and then but every working day. She is a lifeboat to vulnerable people

and has undoubtedly been involved in saving many lives". Phill Stapley, The Wallich

"The respect that Jan has from staff and clients alike is incredible. She is trusted and shows incredible empathy and resilience when providing much needed medical support for individuals experiencing homelessness, many of who have been denied access to other medical services because of their 'challenging behaviour'. She doesn't wait for people to come in for treatment, she goes to where she knows people will be to ensure that they get the treatment they need." Karen Grunhut, Crisis.

The Reflections Network

The Wallich



Statement of support

The Wallich is a leading Welsh homelessness and rough sleeping charity which supports more than 9,000 people a year. As well as supporting people with housing, The Wallich helps people to live safer, healthier and more independent lives. Health and wellbeing support is a crucial part of this.

As a trauma-informed organisation, The Wallich established and launched its Reflections Network in 2019; a bespoke counselling service exclusive to the people supported by the charity. With demand for mental health services increasing, The Wallich created a network of nine trained counsellors, covering 14 areas of Wales. The focus is upon ACEs and further compounding adulthood trauma to stop the revolving door of homelessness.

Therapy sessions are not limited in number and most people who engage receive more than six, one-hour sessions. Many more go on to receive long-term counselling of more than 20 sessions.

Counselling is normally delivered in neutral venues to ensure anonymity and privacy of clients who are attending. This year has seen unprecedented and immediate changes to the Reflections Network. To maintain continuity and avoid breaks in such critical work, The Wallich responded rapidly to adapt and move to remote telephone and videocall counselling sessions.

It was clear that during COVID-19, clients found the restriction of movement very difficult. In response, the Reflections Network launched an additional service where a call from a trained counsellor or peer would be made to anyone referred in within a 24-hour timeframe. All counsellors cleared their diaries to facilitate this crisis response service.

Upon launching the Reflections Network and to improve accessibility, all counsellors wrote a bio and provided a photograph of themselves so that clients could see who they would be meeting with beforehand and to learn a little about them. This was to diminish any existing preconceptions that otherwise may have prevented engagement in counselling.

Based on clearly successful outcomes and evidence, The Wallich aims to embed counselling services into its core framework, keeping the service front-of-mind with frontline staff and constantly gathering feedback from clients to improve the service.

Anonymised case study:

“After a recommendation from The Wallich, I met a counsellor for weekly sessions. Many years ago, I had counselling (somewhere else) and due to this did not really hold out much optimism for what could be achieved, but I went along with a reasonably open mind.

When I first started my sessions, I had very low self-esteem, suffered with high anxiety and was stuck within a negative cycle. From the very beginning, the counsellor put me at ease and had the ability to make you feel relaxed and able to trust them.

As my sessions have progressed, I can see real changes in myself, my confidence has soared. I have started a new job and I have been able to discuss and face things with this help and guidance that I have not been able to at all during my life.

I am stronger now emotionally and feel that I am starting to gain back control of my life. I am learning to put myself first, which is also having a positive effect on my family.

This has given me the tools to be able to drive forward and be able to make plans for the future, something that only a year ago I wasn't able to do, or even contemplate. Back then, my life consisted of getting through one day at a time.

So, in short, thank you, and if you have the need, or the opportunity to have counselling / one-to-one session with a counsellor, then it will only bring positivity to your life!”

Outcomes and achievements

To date, the Reflections Network has issued 400 people with their first counselling session (4% of The Wallich clients) and all appointments happened within 28 days of referral.

During lockdown in March 2020, the call back service launched. 118 people received a crisis call from a counsellor within 24 hours. As a result, telephone and videocalls are now an option for on-going counselling, offering multiple options for people and increasing engagement.

3,643 counselling hours have been facilitated. The need for this service continues to grow with referrals rising.

Case studies submitted by clients, counsellors and

support workers evidence the positive impact for people who engage in therapy. Clients have, as a result, displayed positive and sustained changes on a day-to-day basis including improved thinking processes, problem solving, mental health, reduction in substance misuse, rebuilding relationships and the ability to maintain a secure tenancy; all of which improve recovery capital.

Peer promotion has prompted referrals from clients who may have previously been apprehensive to ask for counselling. Witnessing change in others gives hope and empowers others to take significant steps in their lives.

It is The Wallich's ambition to grow this service with more counsellors, in more areas, changing more lives.

EXCELLENCE IN HOUSING INNOVATION

Sponsored by:



This award is aimed at programmes or projects which can clearly demonstrate how they have developed an innovative approach which has made a real difference to the lives of tenants and customers.

A World First LoRaWAN Automated Emergency Lighting Deployment

Lead organisation: Barcud Housing

Partner organisation: Safecility



Statement of support

Keeping on top of fire safety obligations is not an easy task for landlords, but it is paramount. In order to stay ahead of fire safety obligations most housing associations must deploy a wide range of tools, techniques and processes to keep their life safety systems and compliance records in top shape, and their tenants safe.

Emergency Lighting is a life safety system that's sometimes overlooked in terms of importance. But just like fire alarms and fire extinguishers, it's a crucial part of fire safety and is legally required in most categories of buildings. Without emergency lighting building occupants are suddenly plunged into darkness during an emergency - this can cause confusion and panic and in the worst case scenario even put a stop to safe evacuation of the building.

Landlords have a legal duty when it comes to emergency lighting. It's absolutely essential that they test and inspect lighting at least monthly. Not only that - detailed records that describe testing, any test failures and remediation repairs must also be kept.

This sounds straightforward, but for large estate owners who have multiple buildings over a wide area like Barcud Housing - this is an enormous undertaking.

For Barcud, with 5000 properties spread across Wales, emergency lighting testing is a mammoth task. Once technicians have completed their monthly checks it's time to start the process all over again. It's a never ending cycle of travel, testing, maintenance and record keeping that gets more and more expensive each and every year.

For Barcud, adopting technology to help asset management was nothing new. They had already successfully deployed retrofit LoRaWAN sensors for temperature and humidity monitoring to pre-empt issues such as damp and fuel poverty in their building stock.

LoRaWAN (Long Range Wide Area Network) is a type of low cost wireless communication that connects to the internet. It's like Wifi, but designed specifically for use over a wide area - up to 15km! Unlike Wifi, LoRaWAN consumes very little battery making it ideal for super quick sensor installations in buildings without having to resort to any messy wiring. The Welsh Government has chosen to roll out LoRaWAN coverage across the entire country, providing strong assurances that this technology is here to stay.

Use of these LoRaWAN sensors was a resounding success. They not only tackled a blind spot in ongoing maintenance but actually saved costs in the long run - so Barcud thought - why not apply the same logic to maintenance of their safety systems?

This is where Safecility enters the picture. Based in Dublin, Safecility design and build sensors that take over the job of manual compliance inspection in buildings and replace it with complete automation. Even with the best of intention, manual testing can lead to human error. For systems that are as critical as emergency lighting, this can lead to disaster. Automation eradicates human error involved in testing emergency lighting and vastly improves safety.

In 2020 Barcud and Safecility joined forces to develop and implement the world's first LoRaWAN emergency lighting control sensor. The sensor:

-Eliminates manual testing: no more trekking from building to building testing and inspecting lights, and more importantly no more human error.

-Automatically reports results: testing results are reported by the sensor directly to a software platform where compliance certification documents are automatically generated. There's no more paper reports or spreadsheets that need to be checked and double checked, or records that need to be filed.

-Failures are flagged immediately: if there's a problem with a light, Barcud knows about it instantly and a first-fix can be completed with minimal downtime.

Outcomes and achievements

By working together Barcud & Safecility leveraged LoRaWAN to automate a tedious and cumbersome process. During the successful pilot Barcud were able to reduce emergency lighting costs by 91%, reduce carbon emissions involved in testing by 90%, and most importantly - improve safety outcomes for their tenants.

With sensors, housing authorities like Barcud are now able to unlock knowledge they never had before. Without needing to set foot outside their head office it's now possible for them to view the compliance status of any emergency light they have connected

to Safecility. They can rest easy in the knowledge that when it comes to these emergency lights, nothing has slipped through the cracks, their testing record keeping is up to date and their tenants safety is preserved.

The sensor is plugged into an existing emergency light and executes testing to a perfectly compliant schedule without expensive manual intervention. This is a win-win for tenants. Cost savings will be passed onto them and their safety and wellbeing improved by the drastic improvement in fire safety compliance.

Void Management Unit

Cardiff Council



Statement of support

In the early days of the pandemic, it became clear almost immediately that key services must continue to operate. The challenge that we faced as a Council was to allow these services to continue whilst adhering to the government guidelines. The service clearly had to be redesigned with every process reviewed and changed where necessary to ensure the safety of staff and potential tenants.

Perhaps the most widespread and significant change would be remote working. Where possible, it became crucial that those who could work from home, would work from home. However, it appears that this short term solution to keep people safe and prevent the spread of COVID-19 may be a more long term option for how Cardiff Council deliver their services and they are now (along with many other organisations) considering the viability of a permanent working from home service delivery model.

Before COVID 19, the void property management service relied primarily on paperwork and property inspections to carry out its functions. The service clearly had to be redesigned with every process reviewed and changed where necessary to ensure the safety of staff and potential tenants. This also provided an opportunity to consider the potential to digitalise significant parts of the process but this had to be completed in the shortest period of time using only available resources. A number of Housing Associations stopped work on their void properties and furloughed their staff. This would have been disastrous for our homeless service as we had unprecedented numbers of presentations that started as soon as the lockdown

began. I was faced with the choice of severely slowing down (or even stopping) the delivery of void properties or rapidly changing the system in order to continue the essential service; my decision was the latter.

A team Whatsapp Group was created in order to communicate effectively. Minimal staff went into the office to assist with computer and laptop deliveries. Our legal team and other departments were consulted immediately as to how we could become almost completely digitalised in the most effective way.

Within a week, new processes were in flow in order to allow us to deliver voids to the most vulnerable in society during the pandemic. The key changes were:

- Eradication of key handling by lock changes and installation of key safes to every property.
- Technical Managers go into the property to decide if it is 'quick turnaround' and instruct the Quick Turnaround Officers of works to be carried out stopping duplication of visits.
- Creation of Digital Survey forms to be emailed as necessary
- Joint FaceTime pre and post inspections with the in house team and contractors to avoid variations and visits to site.
- Post inspection to include WhatsApp upload of completed property to be used as a "virtual viewing" for incoming tenants

- Digital signing of completion documents and emailing paperwork such as certification, variations and asbestos surveys.
- Email confirmation of tenancy agreement rather than physical signing.
- Telephone appointments carried out by hub staff to go into the finer details of being a new tenant.
- Prioritising homeless applicants in order to address the significant homelessness issues created by the pandemic

When this was complete and the 'teething' issues had been communicated and resolved, it was time for exchanges to proceed too. We developed a similar process for exchanges in June 2020 with information communicated regarding cleaning and safety precautions. We prioritised those who were in the most difficult housing situations whilst government restrictions were tight but eventually were allowing all exchanges to proceed along with government guidelines.

We also utilised our voids contractor in order to assist with removals free of charge to our customer as this was clearly a barrier to moving during the pandemic when all other facilities were closed.

Outcomes and achievements

104 exchanges carried out in 2020/21 - some in very difficult home circumstances made significantly worse by lockdown (fleeing DV, overcrowding, mental health)

632 lets in 2020/2021 - homeless and urgent cases prioritised to address issues caused by the pandemic

Paperless working which has saved, time, costs and contribute towards our obligations in terms of Well-being of Future Generations (Wales)

Heating on demand

Lead organisation: Merthyr Tydfil Housing Association

Partner organisation: Logicor



Statement of support

For many years the residents in our sheltered housing complex have been affected by the lack of heating provided by an economy 7 system. While the system worked fine the heat that was generated overnight was not enough to keep the residents warm throughout the day/night. This resulted in many tenants either having to use the booster system or use supplementary halogen heaters to heat their properties from around 4pm. Merthyr Housing investigated several options including upgrading to an economy 10 system, installing gas central heating and even installing a biomass boiler. All the systems investigated were unfortunately not a good fit for the facility for reasons including cost, being in contrast with the associations decarbonisation strategy or simply infrastructure capacity of the building. With the wellbeing of our tenants always at the forefront of our thinking we continued to look at many different heating systems which could potentially meet the needs of the tenants and kept an open mind throughout with the desire to be innovative to solve the problem.

After years of investigation and countless dead ends our investigations led us to Logicor and their innovative Infra-Red heating system. The Infra-Red heating system warms the fabric of a building and things within that building not the air within the building as is the case with most heating systems

including gas and economy 7 systems. Excited by this potential new method we moved hastily to undertake due diligence including a visit to the factory where the panels are produced and several visits to other individual homes and also blocks of flats similar to facility we were intending to put the system into around the UK. We also undertook due diligence on the safety of the new technology including studies from universities.

As is often the case with new technology there was an issue with the fact that it was so new. The energy performance rating or EPC of each property alongside the Standard Assessment Procedure SAP are used to monitor the energy efficiency of each property. Due to the fact that Infra-Red is such a new heating source there was no way to grade the properties on this scale and this could affect the rating of the whole association in relation to Welsh Housing Quality Standards. We were able to work alongside the British Research establishment (BRE) to establish that the ratings through installing the Infra-Red heating system would result in the SAP rating of the properties either staying the same or decreasing slightly. MTHA were accepting of this risk to both allow the innovative practice to take place and most importantly to give the tenants the heating they desired.

Throughout the entire process we engaged with the tenants and held regular meetings where tenants could ask any questions, Logicor brought live demonstration events to the tenant group meetings and we installed the system in a flat for guests so tenants could go and trial it at any point for themselves. We also did not enforce the system on anyone and made the new system 100% optional for tenants. This resulted in very few tenants declining the system and those who have had the system installed being delighted with the system and the heat on demand that it produces resulting in tenants being more comfortable in their own homes which is a great result for all parties. While this project was years in the making and at various points did not look like succeeding it was ultimately a great success and we achieved in full what our tenants wanted and we have been able to deliver heat on demand!

Outcomes and achievements

The 2 main outcomes from this project have been fully met. Firstly and most importantly, we wanted to find a solution to our tenants not having heat on demand at any time and not needing to pay an inflated cost through using an expensive day rate or another equally as expensive measure such as using a halogen heater. Secondly, we wanted to find an innovative way to solve this problem taking into account factors such as our desire to decarbonise. Both outcomes have been achieved and are a great source of pride for the project group.

Other than the technical difficulties of the project a huge achievement was to take the tenant body on the journey with us. No one had ever heard of Infra-Red

prior to this project and there was understandably some trepidation amongst the tenants about the new system especially with the digital control panel. With over 75% of the tenants wanting the system installed we feel this is a great achievement and ensures the majority of tenants have the heating on demand from 1 heating source that they desired. Many tenants now have reduced energy bills and is another great outcome of the project.

Newport City Council and Melin Homes - Holistic approaches to move on accommodation

Lead organisation: Newport City Council

Partner organisation: Melin Homes



Statement of support

The pandemic has placed unprecedented pressures on housing and homelessness services. The increase in households to whom the local authority owed a homelessness duty, coupled with the almost complete cessation of lettings by both social and private landlords at certain times has led to an increased demand for both temporary accommodation, and long-term housing that allows people to move on from temporary and supported housing. One way that Newport City Council has sought to address this need is by working with their Registered Social Landlord partners to identify developments that could be brought forward quickly to meet this need. Ty Pill is a development of 8 flats, including a wheelchair

accessible property, by Melin Homes, in conjunction with their partnering contractors LCB and Your Space Projects, in the Pillgwenlly area of Newport. The original intention was for these properties to be let through the local authority managed common housing register. As the units were due to complete in March 2021, Melin Homes agreed to work in partnership with Newport City Council to ensure that units at Ty Pill were helping to address the significant pressures that COVID had placed on the local authority. Rather than the properties being allocated through the common housing register where any eligible household can bid on them, an innovative panel approach was agreed.

By enabling people to make successful transitions from temporary and supported accommodation, Ty Pill provides much needed accommodation whereby future vacancies can be targeted at individuals who need them most. Supporting people to live independently and manage their own tenancies also significantly reduces the likelihood of people becoming homeless in the future and needing to access temporary accommodation again.

Newport City Council and Melin Homes are continuing to work in partnership to support people into long-term, permanent accommodation. A successful bid for Social Housing Grant slippage funding was made in 2020/21 that will allow Melin Homes to develop 9 flats in another area of the city. Given the success of Ty Pill, these will be allocated in the same way, enabling more homeless households to make a planned and sustainable move from temporary accommodation.

Outcomes and achievements

The holistic panel approach to letting properties involved representatives from the local authority Housing Needs Team, Supporting People, Melin Homes, Police and support providers. The panel allocated properties to people who were ready to move on from temporary or supported accommodation. This allowed for applications to be discussed in detail and issues such as support needs and compatibility with other residents to be considered.

All residents of Ty Pill are provided with floating support to help them sustain their tenancies. For some residents Ty Pill is their first tenancy, whereas others have previously lived independently but currently require support to maintain their accommodation. Without the floating support provided at Ty Pill there would be a risk that many of these tenancies would fail, leading to a cycle of homelessness. The floating support at Ty Pill also supports residents to engage with more specialist services.

Newport Independent Living Strategy in Action

Lead organisation: Newport City Council

Partner organisation: Pobl



Statement of support

Newport's Independent Living Strategy provides a blueprint for organisations to collaborate in meeting the accommodation needs of people with a learning disability. The views of people with a learning disability and their hopes for the future are at the heart of the strategy which sets out the partnership working arrangements for key stakeholders such as adults with learning disabilities, carers, strategic housing, social services and registered social landlords. The strategy has enabled the development of innovative approaches to housing which promote independence for people with a learning disability, within existing budgets. One of the most recent successes of

this partnership is the development of supported accommodation for adults with a learning disability in the St. Julians area of the city.

Bank House is a redevelopment by the Pobl Group of a disused brownfield site, alongside the River Usk. When complete, the site will provide over 200 homes that are a mix of sizes and tenures. The development includes a tree-lined river walk that connects to a nearby park and is well connected to local amenities. Through the joint working arrangements established by the Independent Living Strategy, officers from the Strategic Housing and Social Services Commissioning teams identified this as a site where accommodation for adults with a learning disability would be appropriate, particularly as there was a pressing need to find alternative accommodation for one specific individual.

This person was living alone in a property that was larger than they needed with 24-hour support. They displayed challenging behaviours and were unwilling to share staff or live with others, resulting in a high-cost care package. Pobl's Care and Support Team, along with the individual's social worker worked in partnership to prepare them for a move to Bank House where they would be living in their own flat, alongside other adults with a learning disability. The preparatory work took into account the specific needs of the individual and the challenges that a move would present to them.

Outcomes and achievements

The individual requiring more suitable accommodation has now been living in their new home for 3 months. They had previously been living quite an isolated life but in their new home they are interacting socially with other residents and the local community. They are noticeably happier, are allowing staff into their flat and are joining in group activities with staff and other residents, which includes eating meals together. People who have known this individual for a long time have commented on how positive the move has been for them. They are no longer displaying challenging behaviours. This has reduced the cost of their care package and it is

anticipated that this will continue to reduce as they continue to settle even more into their new home.

This is an excellent example of how a strategy delivered through partnership working can bring around significant and lasting change. As well as significantly improving the quality of life of this individual, it has provided a model that can be replicated again. Building on the success of the Independent Living Strategy, the commissioning and strategic housing team are currently working with the Pobl group to provide similar accommodation at another new development in Newport.

Virtual Tenancy Ready Classroom

Newydd Housing Association



Statement of support

In the wake of covid-19, all face-to-face tenant support had to immediately be withdrawn. In response to this, Newydd developed a new and creative response to handling how tenants learn about the realities of renting and what to expect when searching for and moving into a new home.

Our virtual Tenancy Ready offering combined the resources from face to face, new prerecorded detailed videos from staff, with policies and further readings from Welsh Government and partners to capture an in-depth perspective of the housing sector and how to successfully sustain a tenancy.

Due to this offering of enabling remote learning, it was essential that the virtual Tenancy Ready classroom provided an array of learning styles for the learner to best absorb, process and use the information to demonstrate understanding through online tests. Furthermore, in order to replicate socio-emotional aspects developed in a face to face setting, there was opportunity to request 1-1 virtual support with a staff member on the project where they could discuss their thoughts, concerns, queries, feelings and experiences moving into a new property.

Responding to the shift to digital, a tenant said, "The online course makes it extremely flexible for me, I find I am very busy in the day so having the ability to work through and complete in the evenings suits my lifestyle."

This new model was backed up by Newydd's digital offering in which we offer support to tenants in bridging the digital divide. Tenants referred onto our digital support are provided with equipment and virtual 1-1 support to improve basic digital skills to ensure they can navigate around the device and internet both confidently and safely.

By offering a holistic approach to the virtual classroom, it ensures that all tenants have the same opportunity to access, and benefit from the Tenancy Ready program in a time where community support and access to computers has been withdrawn.

We have seen an immediate positive impact following the shift to digital engagement as figures have shown that we have successfully supported 100% of our tenants through the virtual Tenancy Ready classroom, of which has moved into our new developments throughout the pandemic.

Responding to the offering of digital support, a tenant said, "Before the course I only ever used the internet to access my social media. Following a conversation over the telephone, we set up a video call through Facebook Messenger in which I shared my screen, and then together we joined the classroom and went over how to access everything required. The video call provided the reassurance that I was completing the course right."

Many individuals who have undertaken the course also highlighted the benefit of having all the course content, past and future updates readily accessible in the palm of their hands through their digital device. Having this ability provides a platform for the individual to continuously enhance or check their knowledge and understanding on their rights and responsibilities of the tenant and landlord.

For staff involved in the Tenancy Ready project, the virtual classroom provides greater scope and flexibility to move away from past patterns and deliver Tenancy Ready on a much wider scale. More importantly, it provides staff the time to provide more intense

support to individuals identified as most vulnerable, therefore providing the highest chance of tenancy sustainment while also reducing the risk to the association.

Outcomes and achievements

Newydd Housing Association believes in supporting our tenants to ensure the prevention of homelessness and the provision of support to maintain a successful tenancy. With this pledge, Tenancy Ready is central in ensuring this is achieved.

When coronavirus was declared as a pandemic and face-to-face support had to immediately be withdrawn, we made the rapid shift to digital and developed a virtual classroom where individuals was able to easily access content, local support, and links to further readings on the realities of renting and what to expect when searching for and moving into a new home.

Successfully rolled out on 15th May 2020, prospective tenants looking to move into properties across the Vale of Glamorgan were contacted and made aware of the transition to digital. Where we identified a lack of access to an internet enabled device or digital skills, the individual was referred onto our digital inclusion program for ongoing support throughout this process.

Since the virtual classroom was launched, 44 individuals have successfully completed all seven e-learning topics, all successful tenants have continued to stay enrolled in the classroom and receive updates on new content published, five tenants received digital equipment and support and continue to work with digital program.

Swansea Council community scale whole house retrofits for a low carbon future

Lead organisation: Swansea Council

Partner organisation: Welsh School of Architecture



Statement of support

This innovative project is a collaboration between Swansea Council and the Welsh School of Architecture (WSA) at Cardiff University as part of the Specific 2 Low Carbon Built Environment project.

Six off mains gas bungalows, representing typical homes in Wales, have been fitted with external wall insulation, double glazed windows, loft insulation, Ground Source Heat Pumps (GSHPs), PV solar roofs, battery storage and Mechanical Ventilation Heat Recovery (MVHR) Systems. Before the work the bungalows were very expensive to heat with damp and mould problems and very low SAP ratings (as low as 12). By combining solutions to reduce amount

of energy used, together with installing renewable energy supply and storage we are able to not only take big steps towards becoming zero carbon but also create comfortable and affordable homes for the residents. The team from Swansea Council and the WSA worked with the residents and the supply chain to plan, design and install appropriate and replicable solutions for this type of home in an attempt to strive towards net zero carbon emissions.

The bungalows have been transformed into highly energy efficient 'Homes as Power Stations' generating and storing their own energy and providing substantial energy savings for the residents. The homes are more comfortable and attractive and the lessons learned are informing a wider debate around stock retrofitting challenges, vital to meet net zero targets. The whole house retrofit work was carried out with the residents, mainly older persons, in occupation, which presented a further challenge to the project. Careful planning led to the work being carried out in two phases to reduce disruption, with fabric improvements first, followed by the installation of supply and storage technologies. Residents were kept informed about the programme of works, and the stages were carefully managed to minimise disturbance. Retrofitting occupied homes is much more challenging than retrofitting to empty homes, a huge amount of communication and co-ordination was needed and residents sometimes needed to be taken out by their families if the work was going to be disruptive. Internal redecoration was

required due to the nature of the works, and work was also required to make good the gardens after the fitting of the GSHPs.

This demonstrator project is a pathfinder for the Swansea Bay City Deal Homes as Power Stations (HAPS) project where 7,000 homes will be retrofit over 5 years across the City Deal region which includes the local authorities of Swansea, Neath Port Talbot, Pembrokeshire and Carmarthen.

Swansea Council is committed to supporting the Welsh Government (WG) to achieve carbon emissions targets as part of their response to the climate emergency and have also declared a climate emergency. The Council is also committed to reducing fuel poverty for its tenants. Swansea Council is also using whole house approach on its new build schemes, which are part of the WG Innovative Housing

Programme. The monitoring of all Swansea Councils new build and retrofit properties will help provide evidence for WG by providing data across a number of near-zero carbon homes from which the housing sector can continue to learn from and drive down costs. This project will therefore help inform the future around decarbonisation and what can be achieved on a costs v benefit analysis. It is hoped that costs will reduce in due course as the supply chain responds to demands and policy drivers.

The team involved in the project from Swansea Council are taking the knowledge that they have learnt from working on this project to other projects, particularly with regards to how the installation of the technologies needs to be phased and commissioned well.

Outcomes and achievements

WSA have monitored the project in detail before and after the work and the impact for residents is huge. The energy performance certificate (EPC) improved from EPC G with SAP rating 12 to EPC rating A with SAP rating 95. Since the retrofit work temperature and humidity have been at comfortable and consistent levels and CO2 levels are permanently low. During the non-heating season 95% of energy is provided by the Solar PV panels and batteries, bills were £15 over these 6 months including electricity, heating and hot water. Annual energy consumption was 5MWh compared to the UK average of 15MWh. Of the energy used in the homes 2.8MWh (around £500)

was from the Solar PV panels and battery with only 2.2MWh (around £400) from the national grid. During summer an excess of 2MWh is generated that can be sold back to the grid.

The Council's own Building Services team managed the project and carried out the construction work with the local supply chain used wherever possible boosting skills. The workforce involved 14 local people including 4 apprentices studying for their NVO's. Other staff who have come through the Council's apprenticeship program are now fully qualified and mentoring the apprentices.

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

Sponsored by:

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This award celebrates partnership and collaboration across the housing spectrum from organisations that have developed, delivered or driven progress through working in partnership with organisations in and outside of housing

Carbon Literacy Cartrefi Cymru Consortium

Lead organisation: Cynnal Cymru

Partner organisation: 27 Housing Associations
Across Wales



Statement of support

Carbon Literacy Cartrefi Cymru - CLCC is a consortium of 27 Welsh RSL's, supported by Cynnal Cymru who have collaborated to increase Carbon Literacy within their organisations. The CLCC consortium demonstrates a keen motivation from the sector to collaborate at scale- working together in new ways to create change.

The project began in October 2019 when representatives from 16 different RSLs around Wales came together to learn more and hear a proposal to create a Carbon Literacy consortium of RSLs in Wales. The RSL's were supported by Cynnal Cymru as the official partner of the Carbon Literacy Project in Wales and by the Carbon Literacy Project itself.

The delegates of this meeting edited the proposal which went back out to all RSLs in Wales. In January 2020 a meeting surrounding this proposal led to the creation of a Carbon Literacy consortium of 27 Welsh RSLs. The consortium was named Carbon Literacy Cartrefi Cymru (CLCC).

The Carbon Literacy Project based in Manchester has defined the standard of Carbon Literacy and accredits courses and learners and 15,000 people are now Carbon Literate worldwide.

Carbon Literacy is defined as a day's worth of learning around the causes and consequences of climate change, action you can take on climate change and empowerment to make individual and group actions personally and professionally.

The course aims to give everyone the opportunity to explore what the reality of climate change means for them in their home life and work life. Equipped with the facts on how human activity, climate and natural systems are inter-related, individuals, communities and organisations are helped to take action to reduce emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gasses.

Project Timeline

February 2020-Phase I; rounds of Carbon Literacy training for member organisations delivered by Cynnal Cymru.

March- July 2020-Lockdown. Training by Cynnal Cymru continues remotely with 9 participants completing the Carbon Literacy course and subsequently the Train the Trainer course delivered by Manchester Metropolitan University .

July-October 2020-Phase II; 5 training experts from within the consortium work with Cynnal Cymru and Manchester Metropolitan develop a customised Carbon Literacy course for Welsh social housing.

October 2020-Phase III; 73 additional staff participate in online training to become Carbon Literacy trainers by Manchester Metropolitan University.

January 2021 The Welsh Housing Carbon Literacy materials will be completed and submitted for certification by the Carbon Literacy Project before

being translated. Manchester Metropolitan University Course finishes.

February 2021-Phase III; Member organisations can use their trainers to deliver Carbon Literacy training internally to all staff and embed Carbon Literacy into their induction process.

Luke Penny Carbon Literacy Cartrefi Cymru coordinator said: "It is so exciting to see the of CLCC trainers go through the Carbon Literacy train the trainer course. This is the first step in establishing a peer-to-peer learning programme of Carbon Literacy across Welsh housing - empowering organisations to up their game in the response to climate change."

Dave Coleman from the Carbon Literacy Project said: "It has already been inspirational working with Welsh Housing Associations. Seeing and hearing

the passion for collaborative working, and the level of commitment to reducing carbon footprint across their organisations, staff and communities is fantastic. We look forward to seeing the partnership continue to thrive and grow, and to seeing the results of that success, in the organisations, communities and nation of Wales."

The sum of CLCC is greater than the sum of its parts and there are opportunities that go beyond Carbon Literacy. We have already begun to see discussions on collaboration on housing technology, flood risk assessments, procurement and working with schools and tenants.

Outcomes and achievements

- The collaboration of RSL's with Cynnal Cymru and The Carbon Literacy Project has achieved the largest ever cohort of train the trainers globally.
- The Welsh Housing CL course will be relevant, useful and will generate decarbonisation actions for thousands of housing colleagues across 27 HA's.
- As part of the process each participant makes a personal and collective commitment. These commitments will be monitored enabling CLCC to demonstrate real change for tenants and communities across Wales.
- The project will play an important part of overcoming internal behavioural barriers to decarbonisation. A CLCC consortium member said;

"We've done the training, it's raised awareness and as a consequence, this has now happened. From our point of view, would we be looking at electrifying our fleet this year? No. But we are. Would we be looking at a half a million-pound investment to kickstart our carbon reduction plan. No. But we are. We are now also re-procuring our energy to go to green renewables."

- The natural development will be to work with tenants and community groups to develop carbon literacy materials and courses. This work has already begun with Melin Housing Association leading on a school's programme in partnership with Linc Cymru.

IoT for Fire Safety: working together to raise the bar

Lead organisation: Barcud Housing

Partner organisation: Safecility



Statement of support

Keeping on top of fire safety obligations is not an easy task for landlords, but it is paramount. In order to stay ahead of fire safety obligations most housing associations must deploy a wide range of tools, techniques and processes to keep their life safety systems and compliance records in top shape, and their tenants safe.

Emergency Lighting is a life safety system that's sometimes overlooked in terms of importance. But just like fire alarms and fire extinguishers, it's a crucial part of fire safety and is legally required in most categories of buildings. Without emergency lighting building occupants are suddenly plunged into darkness during an emergency - this can cause confusion and panic and in the worst case scenario even put a stop to safe evacuation of the building.

Landlords have a legal duty when it comes to emergency lighting. It's absolutely essential that they test and inspect lighting at least monthly. Not only that - detailed records that describe testing, any test failures and remediation repairs must also be kept.

This sounds straightforward, but for large estate owners who have multiple buildings over a wide area like Barcud Housing - this is an enormous undertaking.

For Barcud, with 5000 properties spread across Wales, emergency lighting testing is a mammoth task. Once technicians have completed their monthly checks it's time to start the process all over again. It's a never ending cycle of travel, testing, maintenance and record keeping that gets more and more expensive each and every year.

For Barcud, adopting technology to help asset management was nothing new. They had already successfully deployed retrofit LoRaWAN sensors for temperature and humidity monitoring to pre-empt issues such as damp and fuel poverty in their building stock.

LoRaWAN (Long Range Wide Area Network) is a type of low cost wireless communication that connects to the internet. It's like Wifi, but designed specifically for use over a wide area - up to 15km! Unlike Wifi, LoRaWAN consumes very little battery making it ideal for super quick sensor installations in buildings without having to resort to any messy wiring. The Welsh Government has chosen to roll out LoRaWAN coverage across the entire country, providing strong assurances that this technology is here to stay.

Use of these LoRaWAN sensors was a resounding success. They not only tackled a blind spot in ongoing maintenance but actually saved costs in the long run - so Barcud thought - why not apply the same logic to maintenance of their safety systems?

This is where Safecility enters the picture. Based in Dublin, Safecility design and build sensors that take over the job of manual compliance inspection in buildings and replace it with complete automation. Even with the best of intention, manual testing can lead to human error. For systems that are as critical as emergency lighting, this can lead to disaster. Automation eradicates human error involved in testing emergency lighting and vastly improves safety.

In 2020 Barcud and Safecility joined forces to develop and implement the world's first LoRaWAN emergency lighting control sensor. The sensor:

- Eliminates manual testing: no more trekking from building to building testing and inspecting lights, and more importantly no more human error.
- Automatically reports results: testing results are reported by the sensor directly to a software platform where compliance certification documents are automatically generated. There's no more paper reports or spreadsheets that need to be checked and double checked, or records that need to be filed.
- Failures are flagged immediately: if there's a problem with a light, Barcud knows about it instantly and a first-fix can be completed with minimal downtime.

Outcomes and achievements

By working together Barcud & Safecility leveraged LoRaWAN to automate a tedious and cumbersome process. During the successful pilot Barcud were able to reduce emergency lighting costs by 91%, reduce carbon emissions involved in testing by 90%, and most importantly - improve safety outcomes for their tenants.

With sensors, housing authorities like Barcud are now able to unlock knowledge they never had before. Without needing to set foot outside their head office it's now possible for them to view the compliance status of any emergency light they have connected

to Safecility. They can rest easy in the knowledge that when it comes to these emergency lights, nothing has slipped through the cracks, their testing record keeping is up to date and their tenants safety is preserved.

The sensor is plugged into an existing emergency light and executes testing to a perfectly compliant schedule without expensive manual intervention. This is a win-win for tenants. Cost savings will be passed onto them and their safety and well being improved by the drastic improvement in fire safety compliance.

Ending Evictions into Homelessness Strategic Partnership

Lead organisation: Bron Afon Community Housing

Partner organisation: Multi-agency partnership.

Primary partner Torfaen County Borough Council



Statement of support

The Torfaen Ending Evictions into Homelessness Strategic Partnership was formed in 2020, partly in response to the Housing Minister's 2019 pledge to 'End all evictions into homelessness from Social Housing', partly because partners in Torfaen knew that we had to support our people and communities to cope with the additional pressure placed upon them during the C19 pandemic and primarily because we knew that 'it was the right thing to do'.

We used the opportunity of the UK and Welsh Government's eviction ban to form a strategic group whose expertise, experience and local knowledge can be drawn upon to ensure that once the ban is lifted, we are all working together and have aligned working practices and procedures to make sure that no-one in Torfaen becomes homeless as a result of an eviction.

The group comprises; Bron Afon Community Housing, TCBC representatives from Housing, Community Safety and Social Care, Melin Homes, United Welsh, Hafod, Linc, Pobl, Citizen's Advice Torfaen, the DWP, the Area Planning Board Substance Misuse team, the

Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, the Youth Offending Service, the Police and Shelter Cymru

Working together we developed the following set of principles:

- That we are able to support the communities in which they operate to end homelessness as far as practicable.
- Where there is no option for a landlord but to seek eviction the partnership will be consulted to explore all possible options for the tenant to seek alternative accommodation therefore avoiding homelessness.
- We will act as a peer knowledge network and partners agree to share information freely.
- We will draw together the experience and learning from partners (including leaders, professionals, service users and carers) across the region
- We will not discuss individual cases but may signpost to relevant officers where specific cases need to be addressed. The group will become involved should any barriers be identified.
- We will provide support to one another where bids are being developed and support the development of partnerships which will contribute to meeting the needs of homeless people in Torfaen.

Following the initial meetings, we realised that we could and that we wanted to do more. We formed a number of working groups to understand how we could adopt the 9 Homes for Cathy Commitments supported by around 100 Social Landlords, Local Authorities and Third Sector providers in England.

The 9 commitments are:

1. To contribute to the development and execution of local authority homelessness strategies.
2. To operate flexible allocations and eligibility policies which allow individual applicants' unique set of circumstances and housing history to be considered.
3. To offer constructive solutions to applicants who aren't deemed eligible for an offer of a home.
4. To not make any tenant seeking to prevent their homelessness, homeless (as defined by the Crisis plan definition).
5. To commit to meeting the needs of vulnerable tenant groups.
6. To work in partnership to provide a range of affordable housing options which meet the needs of all homeless people in their local communities.
7. To ensure that properties offered to homeless people should be ready to move into.
8. To contribute to ending migrant homelessness in the areas Housing Associations operate.
9. To lobby, challenge and inspire others to support ending homelessness and they focus on the key role that Social Landlords have on ending homelessness for good.

and we hope that we will be formally able to adopt all 9 in the very near future.

The Partnership has been used as an example of Best Practice in the Oak Foundation, Shelter Cymru report Working Together to End Homelessness from Social Housing.

Outcomes and achievements

To date, the Partnership has delivered numerous outcomes which will enable people to avoid and to end the threat of homelessness, these include:

- Better working relationships ensuring the best and most timely outcome for homeless people,
- A revised Reciprocal Arrangement between Social Landlord's both in Torfaen and across the wider Gwent area,
- The development of a complex needs panel which will draw together all relevant agencies to offer support to people who are threatened with homelessness and where all other interventions taken by individual Landlords have failed to be effective,
- Arrangement between landlords and Health Board's Mental Health directorate to offer clinical information and advice directly to housing staff.
- The introduction of a range of supported and semi-supported housing options for young people and care leavers who are homeless or who are threatened with homelessness.
- RSL support offered to TCBC to ensure that families seeking asylum are able to be successfully welcomed and resettled in the borough.
- Work to develop a furniture and paint reduce, reuse, recycle scheme.
- New voids and lettings standards to ensure that all homes that are offered to homeless people and families are ready for them to move in to and live in straight away.

Hafachat

Cadwyn Housing Association



Statement of support

Hafan is supported accommodation for single young parents who are homeless. Hafan is staffed by 2 Support Workers called Pauline Mais and Gill Whittingham. The Assistant Manager is Zoe Jones. Hafan is owned by Cadwyn Housing Association.

Hafan Project partnered with Wales Restorative Approaches Partnership in order to deliver the Wales Restorative Approaches Agored Level 1 to the tenants at Hafan in 2020.

Hafan staff and WRAP Nigel Pope had a meeting to discuss how best to deliver the course and engage the tenants. The challenge was Covid-19 pandemic. Hafan Tenants have their own flats and are therefore classed as separate households.

Hafan staff purchased Tablets for all 9 tenants which was paid for by the Welsh Governments Covid-19 pandemic fund. Hafan staff and Nigel Pope decided early on the title of the course 'Restorative Practice Agored Level 1' may be overwhelming or under appealing for the tenants. They wanted something more informal, but that captured the very essence of what Restorative Practice is about. They came up with the name 'Hafachat' because it perfectly described the encouragement of relationships and was a good play on the name of the project 'Hafan'.

Hafan staff and Nigel Pope didn't let childcare be a barrier. They took on an attitude of 'let's roll with it'. 'Let's adapt to the parents and what their needs are'. 'If their baby is crying during the session, that's fine'. The Virtual tablets also gave us an opportunity to do this because children were safe in their flats and their

routine was not disturbed by a creche or new people (child minders). The Virtual opportunity allowed for people to have a choice and they could mute themselves if they needed to tend to their children. Hafan staff and Nigel Pope focused on the advantages of virtual sessions.

The Hafan staff including the Assistant Manager Zoe Jones very much wanted to 'walk the walk'. They not only promoted Hafachat but they all became actively involved by attending the sessions virtually with the tenants. They wanted to show the tenants that they believed it was of value to attend and therefore Hafan staff would commit their time to the course along with the tenants. Hafan staff work on the Agored Level 1 booklets alongside the tenants. Hafan staff participate in the Check ins and Check outs. Hafan staff felt it was important if tenants were expected to talk about their feelings, the same would be expected of Hafan staff.

The final part was creating an element of togetherness through laughter. The Hafan Support Workers Gill and Pauline were and still are incredibly authentic. Their sense of humour is their strength that captured tenant's attention.

We intentionally kept it to one hour to leave people still feeling energised. It was intentionally meant to be snappy, short and to leave people feeling happier than when they first started the session.

Nigel focused on 'well-being in the Covid 19 pandemic' in addition to the Restorative practice. Nigel talked to the tenants about coping techniques. Nigel also provided the tenants a safe place to talk and importantly make sense of how they were feeling. The sessions have and continue to provide reassurance to the tenants. But also have provided a sense of certainty to the week. The sessions are the same time and day each week. Tenants know they have this safety net.

The Hafachat sessions improved the relationships between the tenants. There was a sense of community. A sense of community that happened organically and independent of Hafan Staff. The tenants came up with a safe way of having a community. They came up with Doorstep get togethers. Following on from this there was a Doorstep Halloween party and a Doorstep Christmas Party. They were inspired to get together following the Hafachat sessions but did so in safe way.

Outcomes and achievements

Hafachat sessions run weekly from 4th November 2020 until 31st March 2021.

90% attendance rate for the sessions. Our aim is for 100% of the tenants to have passed Agored Level 1 in Restorative approaches by 31st March 2021.

Outcomes of the course

- Know the purpose, values and principles of restorative practice
- Be able to use restorative circles
- Know how restorative approaches can be applied in their own environment

The tenants have had different major life events happening in addition to the pandemic. The course has given them back control with different coping techniques.

'I've learnt breathing techniques from the course. This has helped keep me calm'.

'I count to ten with my fingers and this keeps me calm' (The five-finger technique)

'It has helped me not feel as isolated as I may have, if I didn't have the opportunity to socialise with other people through doing this'. 'I've learnt it's important to have people around that can check in with you and you can check in with them'.

'I have learnt how to build better relationships using BMR (Build, maintain and repair)'. 'I've enjoyed doing this course and not being isolated'.

'I have learnt that this course has helped me socialise with friends. 'It's made me think of positive thoughts, understand other people's opinions and to be non-judgemental'

Community Support from the Gwynedd Housing Partnership

Lead organisation: Gwynedd Council

Partner organisation: Adra; Grwp Cynefin; and North Wales Housing



Statement of support

When the first Covid-19 lockdown was imposed, Gwynedd Council along with the three housing associations active in Gwynedd (Adra, North Wales Housing, Grwp Cynefin) quickly agreed that there was a need to work together closely for the benefit of social housing tenants throughout the County. The Gwynedd Strategic Housing Partnership quickly evolved into an informal Covid Emergency Housing Partnership with virtual meetings between all Chief Executives and the Council's Head of Housing on a weekly basis.

In what was a very uncertain time for all concerned, with new ways of working and new regulations and guidance having to be dissected and introduced into our day to day operations overnight, the Partnership meetings allowed all partners to work together to

ensure greater resilience by supporting each other by sharing best practice, solutions to barriers, ensuring consistency of service for all social housing tenants in Gwynedd etc.

The desire to work together was clear from the outset and it was obvious that all partners were determined to pool resources to ensure added value to Gwynedd residents. A PPE collection and distribution service was established with all partners helping to convert the Gwynedd Council Camber into a temporary storage and distribution facility for care homes, care in the community projects and later on for schools.

Gwynedd is Wales' second largest local authority in terms of geographical area with many rural and disperse communities. Access to services and amenities is difficult for many settlements and communities in usual circumstances, many being without public transport links.

With the introduction of Covid lockdown constraints and with many residents facing long periods of shielding and self-isolation, access to basic needs and amenities were impossible. Gwynedd Council had already set up an emergency Covid Team to meet the needs of Gwynedd Communities to get access to food supplies in the form of direct emergency support.

Gwynedd's vast county was split into 13 areas with responsibility for servicing the direct emergency support for individual areas split between the four partner members, who committed to providing a network of vans and a staff resource to be able to respond quickly to such requests across the county.

The 4 members' resources were shared to support each other with this work i.e. the Housing and Property

Department may have respond to a request from a tenant of Cynefin and Adra may have dealt with an application from a private home owner etc.

One telephone number and email address (in the Housing and property department) is provided to the Community coordinators and the staff in the temporary Covid Team at the Council to contact for assistance when required.

This resulted in a significant number number of individuals or families gaining access to essential supplies at a time where they were not able to leave their homes and had no other options available to them.

Outcomes and achievements

A great sense of working in partnership was achieved during the delivery of this project, with everyone coming together to get the job done in the most effective and efficient way possible, the focus being on ensuring that the needs of our people were met in a time of crisis.

Working together and sharing resources in an open and safe ethos and environment enabled all partners to cement the trust and collaborative ethos between all concerned. This has enabled the Gwynedd Housing Partnership to make a step up to the next level in terms of co-working. Later on in the crisis period, there was an increasing need for assistance to deal with the homelessness emergency. The strong partnership approach established during the early lockdown undoubtedly contributed to the strong desire from all parties to assist the Council's Homelessness

team to deal with the ever increasing demand from homeless individuals. All three RSL partners quickly came forward with properties which could be made available without delay in order to ensure that no one had to sleep on the streets in Gwynedd.

The legacy of such a partnership approach is certainly evident. Gwynedd are now working in partnership with Adra, North Wales Housing and Cynefin on capital projects under the homelessness Phase 2 grant programme as well as on homelessness support projects. More recently Clwyd Alyn have now been zoned to work in Gwynedd and have become a valuable addition to the Housing Partnership in Gwynedd. It is evident that the open and strong partnership between all parties has allowed them to fit seamlessly into the Housing "Team" in Gwynedd.

Fit and Fed Merthyr Tydfil

Lead organisation: Merthyr Tydfil Housing Association

Partner organisation: Street Games Wales, Merthyr Youth Service



Statement of support

Fit and Fed Merthyr Tydfil began as a partnership initially between Merthyr Tydfil Housing, Street Games and then, 3Gs Youth Project, now MVH Youth. It piloted a holiday hunger provision in the October half term where it supported 30 different children and young people by providing enriching activities and a healthy nutritious meal.

Now, Fit and Fed has grown to be working with the local Youth Service, Barnardo's, and the Gypsy Roma

and Travelers (GRT) project, expanding the project to have eight holiday hunger provisions based around the borough. The partnership extends further, through working directly with Public Health Wales we have skilled project workers in nutritional skills for life, ensuring that snacks and meals provided are nutritiously balanced for those patriating.

The Fit and Fed Merthyr Tydfil Network sees the children and young people as the main partner in our project. Their voice has shaped the expansion of the project and the plans for this going forward. Thanks to them we have plans for a volunteer residential to help up-skill young volunteers to be able to co-deliver the project across the borough and expand to provide 14 sites borough wide. A strong youth voice is not an innovative way of working from a youth workers perspective, but to those who advocate for co-collaboration for the development of services, should clearly see that this is a best practice example of how to empower this in services.

Covid-19 presented a challenging time for Fit and Fed Merthyr Tydfil. Through the collaboration between all the above partners, the project worked to provide over 500 food parcels to families, alongside a food education program. Over 300 Public Health Wales Nutritional Skills for Life Recipe books were issue alongside video support to encourage home cooking.

"Online art sessions helped with children's mental wellbeing, enabling them to get involved creatively and catch up with friends and peers." Gellideg Foundation

"We worked with MTHA fit and fed to develop the project wider, thus enabling more families to access the recipe books, Tesco vouchers, ingredient lists and costings. Fit and Fed project purchased 90 'Nutrition Skills for Life' recipe books and Tesco vouchers for Barnardos families to engage in the project. These were greatly received by all families and proved to be a great starting point to enable families to cook

together whilst on a limited budget, it also helped alleviate hunger amongst families and contributed towards addressing food poverty, helping families to see that 'cooking from scratch' is more affordable as well as being nutritious. The families gained many skills which included: Money management skills, decision making and organisational skills, Food hygiene skills, shopping on a budget, baking skills. The project also helped alleviate boredom amongst family members." Young Carers Manager

Outcomes and achievements

The expansion of the project from one site to eight, and from supporting 30 different children and young people to supporting over 1000 different children and young people, located across the borough of Merthyr Tydfil. Up until Covid-19, it provided 4588 meals and 7287 healthy snacks to those engaged and has provided a minimum of 341 hours of physical activity. For those accessing the project 40 percent

of these have been in receipt of Free School Meals (FSM). We have provided just over 800 food parcels to those facing hardship, 500 of these have been during the Covid-19 Pandemic. We have shaped the future expansion and delivery plans of Fit and Fed based on the consultations held with the children and young people accessing this project.

Newport independent living strategy in action

Lead organisation: Newport City Council

Partner organisation: Pobl



Statement of support

Newport's Independent Living Strategy provides a blueprint for organisations to collaborate in meeting the accommodation needs of people with a learning disability. The views of people with a learning disability and their hopes for the future are at the heart of the strategy which sets out the partnership working arrangements for key stakeholders such as adults with learning disabilities, carers, strategic housing, social services and registered social landlords. The strategy has enabled the development of innovative approaches to housing which promote independence for people with a learning disability, within existing budgets. One of the most recent successes of this partnership is the development of supported accommodation for adults with a learning disability in

the St. Julians area of the city.

Bank House is a redevelopment by the Pobl Group of a disused brownfield site, alongside the River Usk. When complete, the site will provide over 200 homes that are a mix of sizes and tenures. The development includes a tree-lined river walk that connects to a nearby park and is well connected to local amenities. Through the joint working arrangements established by the Independent Living Strategy, officers from the Strategic Housing and Social Services Commissioning teams identified this as a site where accommodation for adults with a learning disability would be appropriate, particularly as there was a pressing need to find alternative accommodation for one specific individual.

This person was living alone in a property that was larger than they needed with 24-hour support. They displayed challenging behaviours and were unwilling to share staff or live with others, resulting in a high-cost care package. Pobl's Care and Support Team, along with the individual's social worker worked in partnership to prepare them for a move to Bank House where they would be living in their own flat, alongside other adults with a learning disability. The preparatory work took into account the specific needs of the individual and the challenges that a move would present to them.

Outcomes and achievements

The individual requiring more suitable accommodation has now been living in their new home for 3 months. They had previously been living quite an isolated life but in their new home they are interacting socially with other residents and the local community. They are noticeably happier, are allowing staff into their flat and are joining in group activities with staff and other residents, which includes eating meals together. People who have known this individual for a long time have commented on how positive the move has been for them. They are no longer displaying challenging behaviours. This has reduced the cost of their care package and it is anticipated that this will continue to reduce as they continue to settle even more into their new home.

This is an excellent example of how a strategy delivered through partnership working can bring around significant and lasting change. As well as significantly improving the quality of life of this individual, it has provided a model that can be replicated again. Building on the success of the Independent Living Strategy, the commissioning and strategic housing team are currently working with the Pobl group to provide similar accommodation at another new development in Newport.

Newport City Council and Melin Homes – holistic approaches to move on accommodation

Lead organisation: Newport City Council

Partner organisation: Melin Homes



Statement of support

The pandemic has placed unprecedented pressures on housing and homelessness services. The increase in households to whom the local authority owed a homelessness duty, coupled with the almost complete cessation of lettings by both social and private landlords at certain times has led to an increased demand for both temporary accommodation, and long-term housing that allows people to move on from temporary and supported housing. One way that Newport City Council has sought to address this need is by working with their Registered Social Landlord partners to identify developments that could be brought forward quickly to meet this need. Ty Pill is a development of 8 flats, including a wheelchair accessible property, by Melin Homes, in conjunction

with their partnering contractors LCB and Your Space Projects, in the Pillgwenlly area of Newport. The original intention was for these properties to be let through the local authority managed common housing register. As the units were due to complete in March 2021, Melin Homes agreed to work in partnership with Newport City Council to ensure that units at Ty Pill were helping to address the significant pressures that COVID had placed on the local authority. Rather than the properties being allocated through the common housing register where any eligible household can bid on them, an innovative panel approach was agreed.

By enabling people to make successful transitions from temporary and supported accommodation, Ty Pill provides much needed accommodation whereby future vacancies can be targeted at individuals who need them most. Supporting people to live independently and manage their own tenancies also significantly reduces the likelihood of people becoming homeless in the future and needing to access temporary accommodation again.

Newport City Council and Melin Homes are continuing to work in partnership to support people into long-term, permanent accommodation. A successful bid for Social Housing Grant slippage funding was made in 2020/21 that will allow Melin Homes to develop 9 flats in another area of the city. Given the success of Ty Pill, these will be allocated in the same way, enabling more homeless households to make a planned and sustainable move from temporary accommodation.

Outcomes and achievements

The holistic panel approach to letting properties involved representatives from the local authority Housing Needs Team, Supporting People, Melin Homes, Police and support providers. The panel allocated properties to people who were ready to move on from temporary or supported accommodation. This allowed for applications to be discussed in detail and issues such as support needs and compatibility with other residents to be considered.

All residents of Ty Pill are provided with floating support to help them sustain their tenancies. For some residents Ty Pill is their first tenancy, whereas others have previously lived independently but currently require support to maintain their accommodation. Without the floating support provided at Ty Pill there would be a risk that many of these tenancies would fail, leading to a cycle of homelessness. The floating support at Ty Pill also supports residents to engage with more specialist services.

Ty Tom Jones: from zero to complete supported housing project in 6 weeks

Lead organisation: The Wallich

Partner organisation: Goleudy, Swansea Council, Pobl Housing Association



Statement of support

In response to the COVID emergency, Swansea Council, Pobl, The Wallich and Goleudy came together to rapidly set up a new supported temporary accommodation project, in a condensed timeframe – six weeks rather than the normal 12-18 months to get a project of this scale up and running. This would not have been possible without an outstanding dedication to partnership working, strong trusted relationships between the organisations and a willingness to do whatever it took to get the job done in order to protect the health and wellbeing of rough sleepers during a public health emergency.

During early April 2020, as a response to the Welsh Government's directive to house all rough sleepers, the Council was placing large numbers in B&B (approx. 70 single households), which was continuing to rise daily. Despite a good supply of supported housing projects in Swansea, they were at full capacity and due to the pandemic, move-on to permanent accommodation slowed down with significant reductions in new lettings across all tenures.

Various solutions were being considered to support the response and at this point Pobl offered Ty Tom Jones, a city centre building formerly operating as a youth homelessness project, for use as a temporary supported housing project during the crisis. A Collaborative Working Group was quickly set up with the Council, Pobl, The Wallich and Goleudy to develop the project.

Each organisation received substantial internal support (e.g. from their executive boards, Cabinet Members, legal department, maintenance service, procurement etc.) to move things forward at pace and take on board the risks associated with the project. The attitude from each organisation was to do whatever it took to get the project up and running. The additional COVID Emergency Homelessness Funding that the Welsh Government made available at the start of the pandemic was also a critical element to enable the establishment of the Project. This allowed Pobl to quickly carry out repairs and adjustments to the property, purchase the necessary furniture and household items, and enabled the Wallich and Goleudy to commit to providing high staffing levels to give 24-hour support.

The project has been set up to provide COVID safe accommodation for 20 individuals providing them with en suite facilities and communal kitchen space. All equipment and household items were provided so that individuals can immediately move in. Pobl provide housing management support, repairs and maintenance etc. whilst 24-hour tenancy support is provided by the Wallich and Goleudy, supplemented by other services attending the project such as Crisis, Barod (substance misuse) and the Homelessness Nurse. The Council's Homelessness Service is closely involved with the allocations to the project and co-ordinates the funding.

Whilst this project was an emergency response, it has also provided the opportunity to look at new ways of working and adopt a rapid rehousing approach, which focuses on moving people forward into permanent accommodation much more quickly than traditional models of supported housing. The Project is also delivering PIE (Psychologically Informed Environments) and trauma informed approaches to dealing with homelessness, which are showing significant signs of success.

The Ty Tom Jones experience has shown what can be achieved by working in partnership. Fortunately, there are historically strong working relationships between

the Council and the voluntary sector, without which the project would not have succeeded. In addition, the crisis meant that decision-making was speeded up and organisations were willing to take on higher levels of risk to ensure that the project could be set up within a very short timescale to address the urgent need. The outcomes and lessons learnt from this approach will inform the Council's review of supported housing during 2021.

Outcomes and achievements

First person moved into project on 11th May 2020 – 6 weeks from start of project

34 people accommodated from 11th May-30th Nov

13 moved forward into permanent housing or suitable supported housing project.

Design and implementation of required legal frameworks eg SLA, MOU, contracts

Trauma informed approach to support ensures that individuals can engage quickly with services they need, eg substance misuse, mental health whilst being supported alongside by housing and job coaches.

Joint working between support providers, Housing Options and RSLs has ensured that the right property is identified, in the right community for any individual, providing them with choice and control to ensure

a successful move on, helping stop the cycle of homelessness. This has also strengthened close working relationships between staff from different organisations and enabled a better understanding of the customer's "journey"

The Rapid Rehousing approach is working and something that will be further developed by the homelessness sector in Swansea.

"Life was hard really hard, homeless and nowhere to turn until tytom gave me a place to stay and my own room and kitchen could cook (which I luv) support workers on hand and honestly probably saved my life. Got me a flat and finally settled in I can't thank the staff enough."

to engage with more specialist services.

CAPITAL project

Lead organisation: Public Health Wales

Partner organisation: Tai Pawb, We Love Morriston Group



Statement of support

The CAPITAL (Community Assets, Participation & Integration: Taking Action Locally) project is funded by the Health Foundation and began in April 2019 and runs until March 2021. CAPITAL is a partnership between Public Health Wales and Tai Pawb, and the Wales Strategic Migration Partnership.

CAPITAL is set in Morriston, Swansea and works with social housing tenants and people seeking sanctuary (asylum seekers and refugees). CAPITAL focusses on the health and wellbeing of the participants, 'how connected' they feel to their community and to each other.

Evidence indicates that both social housing tenants and people seeking sanctuary are more commonly isolated, more likely to suffer from mental health challenges and experience economic hardship than other groups of people.

CAPITAL invited participants to take part in an asset-based community development (ABCD) project. ABCD builds on the assets that are already found in the community and mobilises members of that community and organisations to come together to build on their assets not concentrate on their needs. Participants were invited to form an 'Action Group', to work together on issues they identified as important in Morriston. This action group have now become constituted under the name We Love Morriston.

We Love Morriston seeks to address issues facing the local community using a coproductive approach. Initially facilitated through face to face asset mapping workshops with Co-production Network for Wales and Tai Pawb, after lockdown, the group moved to meeting 'virtually' for the past 9 months.. The CAPITAL project's participatory budgeting approach means that the group can use co-productive decision making to allocate a grant to make a difference in the community.

CAPITAL's approach through co-production and co-ownership has required power-holding 'institutions', to cede or relinquish some of their power to the We Love Morriston group. This has instilled a sense of ownership at an early stage and a member of We Love Morriston summed it up : 'Dignity of everyone's opinions for the betterment of the community. Fair play, balance and listening to all opinions and balanced decision-making'.

For the 'institutions' involved, CAPITAL has been a worthwhile approach with lots of learning. This will inspire work going forward to take place on a more level playing field with service design going beyond consultation to coproduction and involvement.

CAPITAL has also been a learning experience in online facilitation with organisations and participants improving skills in virtual meet ups and communication. This learning can be used by others in community engagement.

A toolkit will act as a roadmap to inform inclusive coproduction for use across Wales to engage 'need to reach' groups.

Participants in the CAPITAL project reported:

- Increased closeness with those in the group and to the local community
- Greater awareness of local amenities and community assets
- Learning and skills development
- Greater opportunities to use their skills
- Increased confidence and resilience
- Amplified voice
- Feeling better equipped to link with key institutions, rights and pathways to participation

A member of We Love Morriston said: 'We learn from different people with different experiences and skills sets.'

The group have faced considerable barriers to their community work in 2020 in the form of the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown arrangements. Rather than mourning the impossible they have focussed on the possible. We Love Morriston have continued to meet with Public Health Wales and Tai Pawb via Zoom on a weekly basis and some members contributing via the WhatsApp group. Members of the group have said: 'By sharing experiences and ideas on the [WhatsApp] platform makes you feel like you are still part of the group.' And 'Virtual meetings have been successful and regular meeting and conversation are essential.'

Outcomes and achievements

A toolkit advising on the learnings of CAPITAL called A Roadmap to Inclusive Coproduction has been produced for use by those wishing to co-produce solutions with need-to-reach groups.

All members of the We Love Morriston group said they feel better supported to create links because of their involvement and participation in the CAPITAL project.

Following the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, lockdown and the social distancing measures, We Love Morriston made a collective decision to focus on the newsletter; in the current circumstances it was an idea they could bring to fruition. Other ideas for use of the funding, and other community activities have been discussed, but these plans have been paused by the pandemic. At present, through co-production, We Love Morriston have:

- produced six newsletters
- set up its own communications channels
- engaged with key local stakeholders such as presenting at the Morriston Regeneration Forum, which is a partnership group working together to support the economic regeneration of Morriston
- built links with other community stakeholders including Mike Hedges MS, Morriston Primary School, The Rotary Club, Friends of Morriston Park
- formed its own constituted identity -the 'We Love Morriston' group

We Love Morriston have big plans for 2021... Watch this space!!

'Working Together' - Tai Tarian and the emergency incident response

Tai Tarian



Statement of support

Tai Tarian is one of the largest social landlords in Wales and has responsibility for over 9,000 properties across Neath Port Talbot and the surrounding area. Tai Tarian is committed to providing good quality housing and a range of services to help people manage their homes. As a community housing mutual, the aim is to continually work to understand the needs of tenants and members to deliver services based on what matters.

The vision of 'Making a Difference' is inextricably linked with the mission for great homes and great communities. Within this framework, the collaboration for 'Working Together' aimed to collectively address an emergency incident, contribute to sustainable homes and communities, fostering a sense of community pride and belonging.

On 21st January 2021, 100 homes were evacuated in Neath after an old mine shaft collapsed, causing extensive flooding.

'Working Together' ensured Tai Tarian could assist Neath Port Talbot Council in effectively co-ordinating the incident response effort, which included the emergency services, local charities and community groups, the Coal Board, Neath College, Family Housing Association and contractors.

19 Tai Tarian homes were affected, which following flood damage assessments resulted in tenants either being able to return, being re-housed or staying with family while works were undertaken.

Tai Tarian had daily conference calls with the local authority's Housing Options' Incident Response Team, sharing information and planning for the re-housing of tenants and residents in emergency accommodation.

The collaboration and the drive to progress actions was facilitated by:

- The Incident Response Team and Tai Tarian regularly reviewing what assistance was required and tailoring the options for individuals
- Tai Tarian identifying suitable properties for re-housing its' tenants and other residents
- Tai Tarian co-ordinating its' contractors together with assistance from Family Housing Association for:
 - Surveys, schedule of works and clean ups
 - Cavity inspections (SAM Drylining)
 - Repair and service central heating (Westward Energy)
 - Repair internal doors and skirtings (materials free of charge by LBS)

- Repair windows and doors (in-house PVC team)
- Plastering and decorating (Family HA)

A testimonial from a local authority incident response officer explained "...how much of a positive experience it has been from a partnership working perspective. I was allocated from Housing Options to work with the properties impacted by the floods, and a large part of this was linked to liaising with Tai Tarian. The rehousing of ... tenants was swift which made a big difference to us in terms of emergency housing requirements."

As well as assisting tenants, practical assistance was given to residents affected by the flood. This included one elderly resident who had no close family support, whose property was badly damaged by the flood and who had no insurance. Tai Tarian and Family Housing Association utilised their own work force and acquired input from their contractors to get works done for such residents.

The Acts of Kindness fund which staff established from their own financial contributions, donated to the Salvation Army relief effort and provided shopping

vouchers for tenants. Food parcels, basic household essentials and gifts were well-received:

"Just want to say a massive thank you for your kind gift its very appreciated!"

This partnership with its' strong community links focused upon:

- stronger relationships
- better understanding of roles
- increased knowledge of good practice
- improved capacity for joint-working

Key partnership goals were:

- agree ownership, staffing and resources
- make better use of staff expertise & experience
- do what we do - better

'Working Together' fits Tai Tarian's framework of value for money principles by investing in communities and service improvements, as well as knowing and doing what matters for customers and engaged, empowered staff.

Outcomes and achievements

Outcomes:

- Collaboration for creative problem solving: Improved emergency incident response times with better community information and problem solving
- Tenant focussed "person centred" approach to housing and support: Sustainable homes where people can thrive by tailoring services for improved tenancies and reduced homelessness
- Co-produced community resources: Sustainable communities achieving their full potential through building relationships of trust and mutuality

Achievements:

- Tai Tarian assisted in delivering a collaborative approach for the flood incident response involving the public, private and third sectors

- The partnership's progress in addressing homelessness due to the flood was driven forward with Tai Tarian promptly responding to the needs of its tenants as well as assisting residents
- Innovative services and support were tailored by Tai Tarian, Family Housing Association and their contractors to overcome the barriers some residents faced in getting works done to their properties
- The collaboration demonstrated best practice by utilising all community assets, drawing upon the community spirit and resilience of local people, charities and businesses
- Tai Tarian's input improved the incident response with positive impacts for the health and well-being of those directly affected by the flood and the wider community

Making a difference in Dinas Powys

Lead organisation: United Welsh

Partner organisation: South Wales Police, Vale of Glamorgan Council and Safer Vale



Statement of support

United Welsh is a housing association that prides itself on building homes, creating communities and transforming lives.

There is a long-standing community of United Welsh homes in Dinas Powys, Vale of Glamorgan; the dynamic of which recently changed with a new affordable and private residential homes development close-by.

In the summer of 2020, during the grip of the pandemic and lockdown, United Welsh started to receive reports from people about low-level anti-social behaviour escalating into more severe behaviour, including crime and breaches of lockdown restrictions.

The majority of reports and complaints related to young people congregating on open land positioned between United Welsh homes and the new private development.

Complaints were received from both United Welsh tenants and private residents, and from the reporting, it became clear that tensions were mounting between these different areas of the community, leading to intimidation, threats of violence and superficial property damage.

While a partnership approach between United Welsh, the Police and Council was required to address and prevent further incidents, a key partner necessary to challenge stigma, break down barriers and restore wellbeing in the area, was the community themselves.

Building trust with people living in the area was paramount, and keen to respond to concerns and prevent further escalation, United Welsh formed an action plan:

- A multi-agency approach with Police, Vale Council departments and Safer Vale to successfully respond to various complaints
- Encourage people in Dinas Powys to work together, and with agencies; gathering evidence for prevention and enforcement

- Restore a sense of pride for living in the area

Our plan involved five themes: Communication, Enforcement, Community improvement, Engagement and Innovation.

Communication: United Welsh and South Wales Police adopted a united approach to communication. This started with joint letters to all households, encouraging people to report concerns. This was mutually beneficial, giving people reassurance and responsibility for making things better, and providing the partnership with more intelligence and evidence.

Joint visits were conducted at homes to address unacceptable behaviour, and regular partnership meetings were implemented to exchange information and improve intelligence.

Enforcement: Significant work was undertaken by all partners to inform, advise and reassure people that collectively, we were committed to taking robust but proportionate action. The community told us that one particular person was responsible for much of the criminal anti-social behaviour, but to bring this person to justice, we explained that we needed the commitment of local residents to take a stand. This work led to us successfully securing an Anti-social Behaviour Injunction in court, preventing the perpetrator from visiting the area.

A new CCTV camera was also installed for reassurance and prevention.

Community Improvements: To prevent large gatherings, fences were repaired and replaced to stop access to the private land. A skip amnesty was arranged for a two-week period to help dispose of a build-up of waste during lockdown, restoring pride across the area.

Engagement: United Welsh worked with the Council to run socially-distanced Play Team sessions on the local green, engaging young people who were frustrated by no school and bringing different parts of the community together. Simultaneously, the police increased patrols to deal with issues and provide reassurance.

A residents group has now been established with United Welsh tenants and private residents at the helm. Their first activity is a Community Christmas Tree for local children to decorate.

Innovation: United Welsh wanted to use community feedback from reporting to consider how to prevent issues and work differently in future. As a result, we are piloting a 'Community Ranger Service' for immediate property repairs and a more consistent, reassuring local presence.

In support of this award, Cllr Eddie Williams, Council Cabinet Member for Legal, Regulatory and Planning Services, said:

“Partnership working has had a positive impact on community cohesion; reduced tensions and assisted

agencies in identifying issues far easier. By working together, we have ensured that our collective objective of making the Vale a safe place to live is a reality for those residents that were impacted.”

Outcomes and achievements

By engaging the community to work alongside them to reduce anti-social behaviour, a safety partnership with United Welsh, South Wales Police, Vale of Glamorgan Council and Safer Vale has made a difference for people in Dinas Powys in a short period of time.

The courage of local people working with agencies to take a stand led to a 12-month Anti-Social Behaviour Injunction against an individual causing distress.

This was reported in the media, showing the wider community what effective partnership work can achieve.

CCTV has been installed to reassure and provide evidence to curtail incidents in future.

An amnesty of 15 skips led to joint community clean-ups with people and the partnership, restoring local pride. Tenants posted photos of the results on social media, commenting it had been a “great help.”

A summer play scheme was attended by up to 30 young people a day, bringing the community together and preventing further ASB.

The new local residents group is a strong voice to improve the area for everyone’s benefits and engage with agencies in future, and United Welsh has used community feedback to help shape a new ‘Community Ranger’ pilot service.

An action plan based on communication, enforcement, community improvements, engagement and innovation has paid dividends.

SUPPORTING FUTURE GENERATIONS

Sponsored by:



ClwydAlyn

This award recognises the contribution of forward-thinking projects which seek to achieve outcomes that will benefit generations to come making sure Wales is a great place to live well both now and in the future.

First time buyers empty homes grants

Lead organisation: Empty Homes Teams - Ynys Mon & Gwynedd

Partner organisation: Welsh Government



Statement of support

Following the dramatic house price increases seen in 2020, the need to support first-time-buyers has never been greater. Several of Wales' coastal and rural communities have seen record house price increases, with many properties purchased as second homes and/or holiday lets, or by people who have decided to relocate from more urban parts of the UK to retire or work from home.

Principality's House Price Index recorded double digit increases in annual prices in five Welsh counties during 2020, the largest increase of 16% being in Anglesey / Ynys Mon reaching an average of £237,782. The average detached house price in Gwynedd in September 2020 was £280,000.

The estimated 26,000 empty private sector dwellings in Wales are a wasted resource and an opportunity to provide a home. The combined Anglesey and Gwynedd figure has been close to 2,000 with a vacancy rate exceeding the Wales average. Many of these empty properties are in need of refurbishment

and modernisation, but first-time-buyers are generally not in a position to take on a loan in addition to their mortgage.

Recognising the combined need to support first-time-buyers and bring long-term empty houses back into use as first homes, the local authority housing teams in Cyngor Sir Ynys Mon and Cyngor Gwynedd have established and delivered an innovative support scheme to assist local first-time-buyers to meet the costs of refurbishing newly purchased empty homes for use as their new home.

Both counties have established similar but slightly different schemes, but have been working in partnership with each other and with the Welsh Government to secure funding, add value, monitor progress, capture outputs, address common issues and share good practice.

<https://www.anglesey.gov.uk/en/Residents/Housing/Empty-homes/First-Time-Buyer-Empty-Home-Renovation-Grant.aspx>

<https://www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/en/Residents/Documents-Residents/Housing-documents/First-time-buyer-HRG-01-18.pdf>

The schemes in both counties have involved a grant of up to £20,000 per eligible applicant, together with project management support from the local authority. The schemes are subject to ongoing review, and revised criteria and grant limits may apply in the future (£15k in Gwynedd).

Funding for the grant has been obtained from a number of sources including :-

- The Second Homes Council Tax Premium
- Welsh Government regeneration funds (2018-21)

The schemes form a key part of the local housing strategies of both counties, and are one of many empty homes and housing need interventions that are being undertaken by the local authorities and other housing sector partners.

Most of the beneficiaries of the scheme are young people buying their first home, many of whom have or will soon have young children - the scheme thus plays a key role in supporting the well-being of future generations in the area.

This initiative contributes to all seven of the well-being goals set out in the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 :-

1. Prosperity - by making better use of resources and sustaining / creating construction work
2. Resilience - by improving the local environment and addressing problem / empty premises,

3. Health - by improving housing choice, standards and living conditions
4. Equality - by helping those on lower incomes to secure homes / achieve better housing
5. Cohesive communities - by improving communities and homes
6. Welsh culture -by supporting areas where Welsh is the main community language
7. Global responsibility - by improving the wider environment

There is also close alignment with the Five Ways of Working set out in that Act in that the scheme forms part of a long-term strategy / plan, involved and integrated working across organisations, clear collaborative working between different agencies and sectors, and prevents premises from remaining vacant and more problematic as they deteriorate.

Outcomes and achievements

The scheme has operated since 2017/18

The total number of First Time Buyer grants awarded / properties improved to date is 155

The total grant sum spent to date is £2.498M giving an average grant per property of £16,129

Some 500 contracts have been awarded to local construction sector SME's

Circa £0.5M of private investment has been levered through private contributions to works.

Properties have been improved, with particular emphasis on improving energy efficiency levels which then results in lower energy costs for owners.

First time buyers have been complimentary of the opportunities afforded to them through the scheme. Examples of comments on the evaluation form include:

"It made getting on the property ladder much easier for someone in my financial position. It helped me make my house a safe and enjoyable home".

"It allowed me to buy an affordable home and to modernise and make it liveable something I wouldn't have been able to do without the grant"

"...made a significant difference as we were able to live together as a family".

See link to IACC Executive Committee Report dated 14.12.2020 - see pages 13-21

<https://democracy.anglesey.gov.uk/documents/s16593/Council%20Tax%20Premium%20for%20Second%20Homes%20and%20Long-term%20Empty%20Properties.pdf?LLL=0>

SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES

This award celebrates projects, initiatives and organisations who have gone above and beyond, working to support their communities during these difficult times.

Here to Help

Cartrefi Conwy and Creating Enterprise



Statement of support

The Covid-19 restrictions in March 2020 had a huge impact on our services. Overnight, our offices closed, non-essential home visits stopped, our community centers and shared spaces closed, all community involvement activity stopped and our Employment Academy closed for face to face support. But tenants needed our help and support more than ever. With people feeling more vulnerable and isolated and a dramatic increase in unemployment we had to work quickly to adapt our services to meet their needs so we set up our COVID-19 Wellbeing Response Team. Their first job was to phone 4000 tenants to see what support they needed. These calls included checking tenants were well, whether they had support from friends, family, and offering help with essential tasks such as shopping or picking up prescriptions.

We worked in partnership with Conwy County Borough Council to lessen the burden on their already overstretched services and to support our tenants to stay safe and well.

During this time, we also launched our 'Here to Help' Campaign. This campaign featured in all our externally facing communications, and the message was simple - If you need us, we are 'here to help'.

Our subsidiary, Creating Enterprise was also able to offer vital support helping to reduce isolation and loneliness and get people back into work. The team had to adapt the service to online whilst continuing to offer 1:1 job support and mentoring sessions. Our jobs bus reached out further into the community, parking outside tenants' houses so tenants could apply for work online. This provided a life changing service to those in desperate need to return to work, often having to adapt their skills to work in new sectors.

We launched our Loan IT project to support isolated and vulnerable tenants to connect digitally with family and friends. Tenants can loan a tablet and gain 1:1 support from a digital champion volunteer either over the phone, online or in the garden. This enabled tenants to learn new digital skills, accessing cheaper goods online and staying in touch with loved ones - a vital lifeline during these difficult times. We are now working with our local health board to pilot virtual GP Consultation sessions with our tenants.

Our Second Chance furniture re-use project has also proved invaluable. As money became tighter and tenants were struggling to furnish their homes with even the basics, we were able to provide furniture free of charge, giving them the chance to turn their house into a home, and set down roots. We have worked closely with Conwy CBC's Homeless team to provide furniture for those moving from the streets into temporary accommodation.

Our 'Making Work: Work for All' project was designed by tenants for tenants and they helped us to launch a range of projects for working families. One of these is a loyalty card scheme (Creating Loyalty) Many local businesses took advantage of this opportunity to offer discounts to local families whilst boosting demand for their own goods and services.

Lockdown also prevented days out so families took charge of the project from their homes, communicating online and organising continued

support for local families. This included baking tutorials and activity packs delivered directly to families who were stuck at home. This project is a great example of co-production in practice.

As lockdown restrictions eased, we recognised the need to continue delivering a Wellbeing service to tenants. We launched a number of outdoor, social distanced activities with our older tenants from Outdoor Bingo to Sing Along sessions.

We have now recruited a team of local volunteers to continue supporting the most vulnerable tenants with regular calls and assisting with small essential errands with the help of a grant from WCVA. <https://www.creatingenterprise.org.uk/en/creating-futures/volunteering/>

Outcomes and achievements

To date the wellbeing response team have:

- made 33,700 wellbeing calls
- collected and delivered 71 food bank parcels
- picked up 106 prescriptions
- done 146 food shops
- provided 8 crisis funding payments from our own fund

Wellbeing volunteers

- Reduced isolation with over 1200 phone calls
- <http://www.welshnewsextra.com/ex-editor-rob-writes-a-new-chapter-after-joining-volunteer-wellbeing-army/>

The 'here to help' campaign has reached over 72000 people on social media and has had over 4,500 reactions comments and shares.

Job Search

- Supported over 90 people into employment
- 155 CVs completed
- Built relationships with local employers to secure interviews for vacancies with 100+ applicants

Loan IT

- 100% feel less isolated

Second Chance

- 207 items donated to 55 families

Creating Loyalty

- Over 350 activity packs given to families
- 49 businesses involved

Here's what our tenants have said about the wellbeing service:

"I am so happy and really grateful for the calls I receive from the wellbeing team, as I am self-isolating and find it really lonely."

"Thank you for checking up on me weekly, it is lovely being able to speak Welsh to you and brightens my day after a chat with you."

The positive flip side of Covid for our organisation is we have been able to reach out to a wider community including those harder to reach tenants living rurally. We have engaged with many tenants who were not involved before.

FACE

Melin Homes



Statement of support

Over the last 15 months, the pressure our schools have been under has been immense, both in terms of education provision and also in terms of the mental health of our teachers and pupils. Our Schools project FACE started 2020 as the first HA to sign the Children In Wales Charter along with our key partnership school Cwmbran High. We have adapted our support to suit the changing needs of our partner schools and have provided pupil sessions and wellbeing support virtually. We even arranged a 'see your smile week' where we engaging with 10 schools over the course of a week, reaching over 1,000 pupils and 50 teachers through fun classes, motivational talks, Q & A's with an authors, competitions and more. We have donated much needed school equipment and even refurbished areas of one school to enable social distancing and provide breakout space for the teachers, massively improving their mental health. This work was done in partnership with our suppliers demonstrating how a community partnership approach can have significantly greater results. Our supplier said "As a local company, supporting communities is very important to us. Seeing the pictures and feedback from Cwmbran High shows how important projects like this are." Supporting local organisations When our staff are working from the offices, our Zest initiative provides weekly deliveries of fruit to encourage

health eating. During COVID-19 we donated all our office fruit to local food banks and our charity of the year, St David's Hospice, as they were under increased financial pressure to continue services. The Abergavenny foodbank were so thrilled with our support they sent us a thank you letter and plaque in recognition. We have very recently worked with one of our suppliers, Robert Price, to donate a van to local charity TRAC2, to assist them in supporting people in the community with food parcels and much needed furniture. Sue Malson, TRAC2, said: "When I arrived to collect the van donated by Melin and Robert Price I was speechless, I don't think anyone realises what a difference this will make. We will be able to help more people and provide a one-to-one service. We can't wait to start using Suki - our new name for our new trusty van. Thank you to both Robert Price and Melin for their support." Our development subsidiary also supported the local organisation to assist those in poverty by donating all the furniture from their show home on one of their new schemes. We supported local charity Stump Up for Trees by purchasing 255 trees to be planted for each of our staff, showing our commitment to local charities and the environment. In addition to this, we have supported local organisations who have been struggling through COVID, donating 70 gifts and 100s of selection boxes to the local Santa appeal, donated £300 of gifts to a local Age Connects appeal and supported the provision of sanitary products to those who can't afford them through Period Poverty Campaign in Newport. Over the last 2 years, we have supported St David's Hospice as our charity of the year. Before the pandemic hit, we were nearing our target of £10k, however all the fundraising events were cancelled. We certainly didn't let that stop us and arranged our own virtual events to raise further vital funds for the charity, such as Leadership dares, virtual coffee mornings, raffles and much more. Amazingly, we successfully raised a grand total of £16k for the charity, which is in desperate need and will certainly make a life changing difference to those that need the support.

Outcomes and achievements

We have worked with 34 schools, engaged with 9,797 students, helped 1255 teachers through our schools project, FACE. Support that we have provided has specifically been targeted around supporting mental health, especially since the pandemic hit. Following a donation of equipment to a local school, Cllr Davies said "Wow, I really didn't expect so many items. Thank you so much." Following the refurbishment of areas at our key partner school, the Headteacher expressed "Thank you for our staff room COVID-19 refurbishment. Our staff really appreciate all your efforts." This had the impact of providing a safe place

for the teachers to use to relax and unwind outside of the classroom and has had a significant impact on their mental health as a result. Following our recent purchase of a new Melin minibus, we donated our old bus to our local school as they were one of the few schools within our community that could not afford a bus. They were astounded by our generosity and the Headteacher said "I never seem to have good days let alone weeks so that's the best news I have had in a while. Melin Homes, kindest housing organisation in the whole of Wales".

Proud to do our part for Merthyr!

Lead organisation: Merthyr Tydfil Housing Association

Partner organisation: Merthyr Tydfil County Borough council, Gellideg foundation



Statement of support

When the Pandemic took hold in spring 2020 and the first lockdown came into force it was clear that Merthyr Tydfil like every other community were in for hard times. In an area of high deprivation the effects of the pandemic were felt acutely and very swiftly. One of the hardest hit initially were families who relied on school meals and without which would soon be in food deprivation. Merthyr Housing alongside Merthyr Council swung into action within 1 working day of the pandemic. We redeployed our community development team as well as our maintenance team including our vehicles to deliver over 1200 free school meals to hundreds of families with the first 2 weeks.

As well as providing school meals we quickly received funding to deliver emergency food parcels to community members who were isolating or otherwise unable to get to the local amenities for essentials. Over the course of the pandemic we provided 231 food parcels to tenants who would otherwise have had to rely on foodbanks or other sources of assistance.

After working with the Council to deliver free school meals for the first weeks of the pandemic it became clear that community groups who had also set up emergency food provisions for community members also needed assistance. Again Merthyr Housing obliged to assist our community with staff members and association vehicles used to collect 2 van loads of food per week from Fareshare Cymru in Cardiff to

transport additional food to the Gellideg Foundation for parcel distribution across the county borough resulting in 6703 food and household/sanitary product deliveries across several months as well as 2682 freshly prepared meals. To ensure the food was able to be delivered Merthyr Housing also allowed staff to deliver the food parcels from Gellideg Foundation and also allowed Furloughed staff members to use organisational vehicles to volunteer on the project.

As well as the massive undertaking of food distribution across the borough our community Development team sought to ensure all community members had access to healthy and affordable food throughout the pandemic. We managed this through upscaling our community food co-op to a community pantry model where any community members were able to purchase fresh products as well as an essential hamper box and all this was delivered to the door with cash or contactless payments available to again reduce the stress of shopping or leaving the house for those who are isolating or simply did not wish to enter areas with many other people.

As well as ensuring food stability for our community we did our best to assist both the physical and mental wellbeing of our tenants and the wider community. We delivered hundreds of activity packs with both adult and children's activity packs available each week. We also delivered Young people specific projects including gifting families play equipment such as tennis sets that could be used in the garden or in the street and an activity challenge which enabled families to be motivated to exercise together. On the suggestion of our staff members we engaged with the children's ward at Prince Charles hospital and put together a care package to ensure young people who were having an awful time made worse by having to isolate during the pandemic at least has sufficient levels of basic play provisions such as crayons and puzzles.

Throughout the pandemic Merthyr Housing did what we needed to ensure the most vulnerable within our society were assisted and knew that Merthyr Housing were there for them. The pandemic was difficult for everyone and Merthyr Housing were proud to do our part for Merthyr!

Outcomes and achievements

The biggest outcome from the pandemic was that Merthyr Housing were able to assist our tenants and community members when they needed us the most. It was truly inspiring to see the levels of commitment from both Merthyr Housing staff and partners who through the trials the pandemic brought were able to work together for the benefit of our community.

There are many ways we could measure the success or achievements of the community work that was undertaken during the pandemic and while there are numbers based evidences within this application of the numbers of people helped or who received assistance it does not tell the full

picture. From speaking with Staff members from both Merthyr Housing and our partners working on the ground through the pandemic, it is clear that the achievements and outcomes from our work are best measured in the countless smiles of gratitude from people who truly appreciated the help they received. The 5-minute chat with staff members who often were the only people they interreacted with face to face for months, it is through these interactions that we are able to say when we look back, we were proud to be there for Merthyr!

Swansea Together - Feeding the vulnerably housed during the COVID-19 pandemic

Lead organisation: Matthew's House, Swansea

Partner organisation: Zac's Place



Statement of support

In response to the emerging Covid-19 pandemic in March 2020, Matthew's House, Zac's Place, Swansea Council, Swansea Council for Voluntary Services, The Wallich, Crisis Skylight South Wales, Neath Port Talbot Council, Caerlas/Goleudy, YMCA, local politicians, Mecca Bingo, Where's Doris, The Shared Plate, Sameera Foundation, Goggi's Cuisine, Swansea City Football Club, Thai Bach and the NHS and Public Health Wales came together to ensure that homeless, vulnerably housed and vulnerable people would receive meals on a daily basis throughout the height of the crisis in a safe way.

The challenge faced by the community was to ensure that that the homeless and vulnerably housed population in Swansea had accommodation to decrease the spread of Covid-19 and enable self-isolation to keep people safe from risk of harm at a time when homeless and vulnerable people in Swansea began to see a reduction or withdrawal of many of the services on which they depend. A lack of food was the greatest challenge and worry faced by many people. The Swansea Together response, led by

Matthew's House and Zac's Place, with an outstanding level of commitment and collaboration from all partners involved, ensured that people's basic needs of daily food support was met safely throughout.

Over 55 organisations and 100 volunteers collaborated to deliver this project including the local authority, charities, NHS, private businesses, independent businesses, supermarkets, churches and community groups. Everyone on the streets was offered a bed and winter provision was extended all year, including a substantial hot meal every day. This crucial element helped keep rough sleeping in Swansea to the lowest levels for over 20 years.

Each week, volunteers in five venues (Matthew's House, Goggi's, The Shared Plate, Swansea City Football Club and Mecca Bingo) across the city prepared hot meals which were then transported using community transport schemes and volunteers to get the meals to those who were unable to either cook food themselves or have difficulty buying food.

Over 18,000 prepared meals were delivered over four months (7 days a week) to 21 locations and 307 emergency food parcels were also delivered during this period. When the lockdown period ended, plans were put in place to shift from delivery to a take-away service. A stronger food poverty network and relationships between organisations developed which support a more effective emergency food provision longer term.

Out of the Swansea Together network, a seven day a week emergency outdoor food service was created. Now, Matthew's House, Zac's Place, St. Mary's Church and City Church (i58) are available at regular days, times, and locations for people to access a hot meal if they need it and plans are also in place for the Christmas period. These were the original organisations supporting the city before the pandemic, now in a position to return to their roles.

The Swansea Together network during lockdown enabled these groups to remain in a stable position and able to return to serving the city. This new development is now meeting an even greater need as the number of people at risk of homelessness are rising. As the demand grows, so does the provision to match it in a way that is collaborative and effective. By being open in person, albeit socially distanced, there is now an opportunity every day of the week for

people struggling with housing to touch base with a person who can help. All four organisations have relationships with key housing advisors who can feed back to each other on the support that is available, as well as the difficulties people are facing. This increases the conversation and supports everyone to work better together.

Outcomes and achievements

55 organisations collaborated on Swansea Together

100 volunteers worked to deliver the project

5 venues were transformed into food preparation centres

Over 18,000 meals delivered

307 emergency food parcels delivered

Everybody in B&B and other forms of temporary accommodation received a substantial meal 7 days a week and this had a direct impact in ensuring that many people did not return to rough sleeping

Stronger partnership working legacy

Messages of thanks from people receiving support from Swansea Together:

"I would have gone hungry for days without this"

"This place saved my life"

"I cannot thank you enough for everything you have done for us, it really means a lot. Hope all is well. Thank you ever so much from us all at Tudor Court"

"I feel that someone cares. If not for the food parcel, I would have gone hungry for many days"

"It goes a long way that good people are on hand to help. Much love and big thank you"

"Receiving a food parcel everyday makes me happy and it's nice to know that there are still good people out there"

"Thank you for helping us"

'Safe and Well' - Tai Tarian and the pandemic response

Tai Tarian



Statement of support

Tai Tarian is one of the largest social landlords in Wales and has responsibility for over 9,000 properties across Neath Port Talbot and the surrounding area. Tai Tarian is committed to providing good quality housing and a range of services to help people manage their homes. As a community housing mutual, the aim is to continually work to understand the needs of tenants and members to deliver services based on what matters.

The vision of 'Making a Difference' is inextricably linked with the mission for great homes and great communities. Within this framework, the partnership for 'Safe and Well' aimed to collectively deliver a response to the pandemic, contribute to sustainable homes and communities, fostering a sense of community pride and belonging.

In response to the first lockdown, the Safe and Well project was launched. It aimed to support vulnerable residents advised to self-isolate but with no support from family, friends or neighbours. The project was developed remotely, with staff making wellbeing calls.

Tai Tarian joined the partnership to ensure their tenants were safe and well by liaising with Neath Port Talbot Council to identify those on the NHS shielding list. But to maximise making a difference at this difficult time, Tai Tarian decided to reach out to all of its' tenants - circa 9000.

Other partners included Neath Port Talbot CVS, local councillors, community champions, local charities and community groups, working together to provide a safety net of services and resources.

Twice weekly conference calls served to drive the partnership and project forward with a process map

evolving to capture different categories of tenants and resources.

Case study: During a wellbeing call, a tenant disclosed they had experienced domestic abuse. The tenant explained her adult son no longer lived with her due to his verbal abuse but some harassment had continued. Before lockdown the tenant had been in contact with Women's Aid but she now thought the service may have stopped because of the pandemic. Due to anxiety she rarely left the property and relied upon an ex-partner to get shopping but who was now self-isolating.

A referral was made to a foodbank with a Tai Tarian trusted volunteer delivering the food parcel and after making the necessary checks, the tenant was assured that Women's Aid was still able to provide her with support.

The positive feedback following the wellbeing calls included one tenant commenting, "...that they are so impressed by the way Tai Tarian has handled this whole Corona Crisis and the effort made by staff to make sure everyone had at least one phone call a week to reassure tenants there is help at hand if needed."

This partnership with its' strong community links focused upon:

- stronger relationships
- better understanding of roles
- increased knowledge of good practice
- improved capacity for joint-working

Key partnership goals were:

- agree ownership, staffing and resources
- make better use of staff expertise & experience
- do what we do - better

The following testimonial was received from Stephen Kinnock, MP for Aberavon; "Your workforce has supported many tenants at a very difficult time, especially with wellbeing phone calls, and they have continued to provide vital services that tenants rely on. I'd also like to thank you for donating vital personal protective equipment to those on the frontline treating patients..."

'Safe and Well' fits Tai Tarian's framework of value for money principles by investing in communities and service improvements, as well as knowing and doing what matters for customers and engaged, empowered staff.

Outcomes and achievements

Outcomes:

- Collaboration for supporting vulnerable people: Improved response to the pandemic with better community information and problem solving
- Partnership's two way referral system for Safe and Well: Sustainable homes where people can thrive by tailoring services for improved tenancies and reduced homelessness
- Network of community champions: Sustainable communities achieving their full potential through building relationships of trust and mutuality

Achievements:

- Tai Tarian assisted in delivering a collaborative approach for Safe and Well, with staff going above and beyond to ensure tenants could manage.
- Partnership conference calls ensured key information was shared and progress was monitored, helping prepare for further lock downs.

- Tai Tarian helped develop a two way referral system for food (786 requests) and prescriptions (381 requests).
- Staff were quickly mobilised to make wellbeing calls, with a new database and directories of assistance developed.
- Staff contacted 8,639 (98.40%) of tenants, with actions agreed for the remaining as part of a planned exit strategy.
- Rapport was built with tenants and the approach included small acts of kindness paid for by staff via their refreshments fund.
- Follow-on referrals, included 72 being made to the financial inclusion service for unemployed/ furloughed tenants.

Tackling social isolation with Connect

United Welsh

connect



Statement of support

United Welsh is a housing association that prides itself on building homes, creating communities and transforming lives.

Connect, a United Welsh project funded by Comic Relief, is designed to improve health and wellbeing by reducing feelings of isolation among older people.

Connect supports people aged 65+ living in our sheltered accommodation to 'connect' with their community through forming relationships and participating in activities.

Connect launched in Blaenau Gwent in 2018, but in 2020 when older people were asked to self-isolate and social isolation became an even greater risk, the project has been a lifeline.

Connect is delivered by two facilitators, recruited local volunteers and community leaders who work with Connect to host engaging activities for older people.

Before the first national lockdown in March, volunteers were giving almost 100 volunteering hours each week by leading social activities at our sheltered accommodation and Extra Care schemes. This included:

- The Intergenerational Connect Choir with St Mary's CIW Primary School
- Group baking and cooking
- Knitting groups which raised money for schools and local charities
- A Digital Heroes scheme where pupils from a local primary school are helping to make silver surfers of older tenants
- Communal gardening projects
- Arts and crafts groups

In 2020 Connect adapted, and the community relationships with older people that formed before the pandemic have helped them tremendously during a difficult time.

The Connect project facilitators and volunteers have made over 1,500 wellbeing phone calls to older people, reaching out with friendship to those at risk of loneliness.

The team have also worked with our school partners to keep up the spirits of our older tenants.

Pupils from the Intergenerational Choir with St Mary's School have visited tenants' communal gardens for socially-distanced chats as well as regularly delivering happiness packages, cards and cakes.

Blaen Y Cwm Primary pupils made planters for tenants' gardens and Roseheyworth School sent happiness photos.

These are just a few examples of activities held to support older people during a difficult time; made possible by the friendships formed through Connect.

One heart-warming story is about 95-year-old tenant Brin Withers and his 10-year-old choir friend Eve Lewis.

Brin said: "I wasn't too keen on going to the Connect choir in the beginning. I thought there would be children running everywhere and it would be too noisy, but they twisted my arm.

"When I went, I loved it. The kids are always excited to sing with us. It made me feel like a youngster again!"

During lockdown, Eve has been to Wesley House to wave at Brin through the window and occasionally chat in the garden. She also made and delivered a word search with words that are special to the pair, including 'drafts' and 'friendship' as part of a happiness package.

Brin continued: "Lockdown has ruined me not being able to see my family, and I can't hear very well on the phone so sometimes it has felt really lonely. I will never be able to tell Eve how much I appreciate everything she has done for me. We ring each other every Tuesday and it's the highlight of my week."

Eve's mum Adele added: "They've got a close bond and it's a different type of friendship for Brin. The choir and the friendships lift all their spirits."

Connect has also had a positive impact on the volunteers it recruits and supports to lead activities. Between gardening, shopping, collecting medication and more during lockdown, the volunteers said that offering support helped their own wellbeing during a hard time.

Connect has received national recognition, featuring on various BBC programmes for Comic Relief as well as the local media. Here are examples:

<https://vimeo.com/398811361/65d147d54a> (private link - please don't share)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JLcDL3Rmrfg>

<https://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/18485198.blaenau-gwent-choir-song-hit-act-clean-bandit-stars/>

Outcomes and achievements

United Welsh's Connect project reduces isolation and loneliness by supporting older people to form friendships and 'connect' with community activities.

The project has delivered real health benefits, and when the older community were forced to self-isolate due to Covid-19, Connect became a lifeline.

Before March 2020, over 300 older people living in United Welsh homes and community members had enjoyed Connect activities.

Volunteers were giving almost 100 volunteering hours each week and 95% of older tenants involved with Connect said the project had made a positive impact on their perception of where they live.

During the pandemic, the strong partnerships of Connect have raised the spirits of the older community in Blaenau Gwent during a difficult time.

The project has made over 1,500 befriending calls and local school partners have worked with United Welsh to create activities for VE Day and National Remembrance Day; as well as making frequent gestures of friendship.

The feedback from older people shows how much Connect has meant to them.

82-year-old Mary Steele said: "I have struggled through lockdown with no one able to come into my flat and shopping dropped to my door. Calls from Libby (Mary's friend from the Connect Intergenerational Choir) have boosted my spirits. I miss her and all the children so much."

Wales & West Housing Group Covid Community Support Project

Wales & West Housing Group



Statement of support

At the start of the national lockdown, Wales & West Housing staff took a pro-active approach to the welfare of its residents.

Telephone calls and/or visits were made to everyone who was elderly or known to be vulnerable.

Forms of help included:

- Collecting and delivering essential prescriptions and shopping
- Connecting residents with organisations in their area who provided specific support
- Delivering food parcels
- Collecting and delivering essential cooking and kitchen equipment for residents to replace broken equipment and for other moving into their first homes

Examples of support for residents include:

- Delivering furniture to a resident who was struggling to make ends meet and was experiencing poor mental health. Living in an empty flat with a broken cooker, few friends to call upon and unable even to visit his mum and dad, who were self-isolating at home.
- Arranging food bank parcels and financial support to a single mum who was struggling to feed her family when she was forced to give up work to look after her young son when lockdown started. WWH staff stepped in to help and arranged food bank parcels, a DAF emergency payment to cover her fuel bills, while the DWP established whether she qualified for Universal Credit.
- Being there and providing support for a victim of domestic abuse to get help. Through the support, one Tenancy Support Officer was able to build the trust of a single mum who admitted she was being financially and mentally abused by her ex-partner. This led to her getting help from Women's Aid she desperately needed.
- Bringing old and young residents who were shielding together through penpal projects where they were able to share their experiences of the pandemic through eagerly-anticipated letters.
- Creating a support directory of organisations who could help their residents in each of the 15 local authority areas.

Feedback from residents:

"It's truly comforting to know that my landlord is there to help with any problems I may have."

"Thank you to WWH staff for their phone call. Nice to know caring people are around and about us."

"I love that you have been reaching out to your vulnerable tenants - really kind and lovely - thank you."

"I can't speak highly enough of the ladies and men who call me every day from the service centre. I want to thank them all so much - they are amazing"

Outcomes and achievements

Overall 3,000 residents were contacted highlighting communities and individuals in desperate need.

Staff took immediate action.

Examples of going that extra mile (at a safe distance and wearing masks when required) include:

- Helping vulnerable and elderly residents with their shopping and delivering medication
- Helping residents in financial crisis with support to claim financial help and supporting domestic abuse sufferers.

Working in partnership with local charities, staff helped families in desperate need by:

- collecting and delivering essential cooking and kitchen appliances and furniture from charities like Boomerang Cardiff and even from their own homes in some cases

- distributing food parcels from foodbanks
- volunteering to carry out deliveries for local charities eg Oaks Garden Nursery run by Vision 21 in Cardiff

In the wider community WWH provided Making A Difference grants to support health and care workers delivering services in their communities, which helped buy:

- PPE for health and care workers
- iPads for Cardiff Midwives to keep in touch with new mothers
- storage units for elderly hospital patients moving to step-down care.

Calls and visits continued throughout lockdown and beyond for all those people who wanted it.

All Together

Adra



Statement of support

As a partnership response to offer additional support to communities impacted by COVID across Gwynedd, Adra swiftly developed the All Together initiative back in the spring of 2020 alongside Gwynedd Council, Grwp Cynefin, Menter Mon, Citizens Advice, Mantell Gwynedd and Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board. The All Together partnership identified 3,455 high risk people due to their medical conditions, providing them and families in need with weekly emergency food boxes. Gwynedd Council developed a School Food Scheme, recycling dry foods which weren't being used at Schools and distributing these to the 10 food banks in Gwynedd. Adra resident feedback; "From the start you've been friendly and helpful and made me feel comfortable. I feel much

better after talking to you and I look forward to every Thursday afternoon to have a chat with you." Kathleen Hughes, Supported Housing Officer - Adra, added: "Hearing customers say how my support has genuinely helped them during the pandemic, when sometimes they didn't know which way to turn, gives me the best feeling." Impact and difference to people's lives Adra was one of five housing associations across Wales which supported Ash Wales and Public Health Wales with a study, raising awareness with tenants around the increased risks if you smoke of catching COVID. Adra was among the first in the UK to make use of ASB legislation which was amended due to COVID, enforcing three injunctions against tenants in Wrexham who caused problems for neighbours by ignoring social distancing guidelines. Geraint Jones, Adra's Neighbourhood Services Manager, said: "Keeping our tenants safe is our top priority and continues to be foremost during COVID; our team has reinforced messages around social distancing, addressing loneliness and mental health issues by identifying the people over 65 that needed that weekly call, it meant a lot to them. The rewarding part is when an 80 year-old lady in Bethesda is eagerly waiting for a call on a Wednesday afternoon, because no one else is making that call." Partnership working Adra organised well-being events to reduce social isolation, working with Gwynedd Council, Menter Mon and Dylan's restaurant to deliver ready meals and food parcels to vulnerable individuals and families. Adra identified a gap in support for families with young children, who

were isolating or in financial hardship, and developed a baby box project in partnership with Barnado's to provide nappies, wipes and food supplies to young families.

Adra's head office in Bangor has been transformed into a COVID Testing Centre for NHS staff and Adra has supported key workers to access housing alongside Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board. Emma Davies, of Gwynedd Council's COVID Support Team, said: "By working with housing association Adra, we have been able to contact 3,387 people on the shielding list, and have registered 1,661 for the weekly food box. Many individuals and families are suffering for various reasons because of the crisis, but it is a difficult and anxious time for all of us, and there is no need to be afraid or embarrassed

to admit that." Carwyn Humphreys, of the Gwynedd Volunteer Centre, Mantell Gwynedd, added: "The partnership between Mantell Gwynedd and Adra was key during lockdown. A buddy project was set up where volunteers registered on the Gwynedd Volunteer Bank were paired with Adra tenants who needed emergency support. The partnership has been extremely successful and is a credit to the multi-agency collaborative working approach that took place, during an extremely challenging time." Inspector John Aspinall, of Gwynedd North District Police, added: "The support we get from Adra is exceptional, significantly helping those residing in our community, especially the vulnerable who need safeguarding."

Outcomes and achievements

The All Together partnership made welfare calls to 3,500 high risk elderly and vulnerable people across Gwynedd ensuring weekly deliveries of emergency food boxes throughout the shielding period. Created an Adra Covid Hardship Fund, with £50,000 allocated to support tenants and communities facing financial and wellbeing hardship; 24 projects supported to date including local food schemes and well-being initiatives, such as family craft kits and mindfulness packs. More than 60 Adra tenants were paired with a volunteer buddy. Worked in partnership to provide and deliver Personal Protective Equipment to volunteer networks and key workers in Gwynedd. Adra provided £15,000 in financial support to food banks

and supported with collection and delivery of food donations from businesses across Gwynedd. Outdoor well-being events were organised amongst elderly Adra residents at three sheltered housing sites to tackle loneliness and isolation during COVID (outdoor concert/sing along, socially distanced bingo). Adra worked with partners including Citizens Advice in Wales on a social media campaign to raise awareness of where to go to get help with benefits and income advice. A recent survey carried out by Mustard research for Adra, shows customer satisfaction for supported housing.

EXCELLENCE IN CHAMPIONING EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

Sponsored by:



This award will recognise organisations who are leading on promoting equality and diversity in their businesses, driving positive, meaningful change and who are contributing to building a truly inclusive community.

LGBTQ+ older people and sheltered & retirement housing - a good practice guide

erosh



Statement of support

ErosH has developed a practical, accessible guide on LGBTQ+ Older People and Sheltered & Retirement Housing aimed at encouraging providers to better support LGBTQ+ residents to live their life of choice free from homophobia and discrimination; to better promote schemes as LGBTQ+ affirming; and to raise awareness and understanding of LGBTQ+ communities amongst residents.

There is much evidence highlighting the extent to which older LGBTQ+ people have experienced disadvantage and discrimination which impacts on their expectations e.g.:

[Older LGBTQ+ people] "have experienced a lifetime of discrimination, fear and isolation. This continues to impact on their expectations of housing, support and care as they age, and their anxiety about facing further discrimination" and "many of their peer age group are still homophobic".

"Many gay and lesbian people have faced years of discrimination. They have a right to appropriate housing and support as they age."

"Home is particularly important for the older LGBTQ+ generation who often do not feel safe in the wider world, and isolation continues to be a major concern."

(Guardian, 2016)

"Trans people are at higher risk of becoming homeless or vulnerably housed." (Action for Trans Health, 2021)

"Homelessness amongst trans people is disproportionately high. Stonewall Housing has seen an increase in trans people accessing their services from 8% in 2014-15 to 23% in 2017-18." (Homeless Link, 2021)

LGBTQ+ older people struggle to find 'affirming' accommodation. Specialist schemes are rare and providers don't always promote schemes as 'LGBTQ+ affirming' even when they are. LGBTQ+ people worry about growing old without family support, and may also be discriminated against on other grounds.

ErosH members reported an increase in discrimination experienced by LGBTQ+ people in sheltered schemes to the extent that some chose to no longer be 'out'. ErosH therefore developed this guide which focuses on improving awareness and understanding of the needs and concerns of older LGBTQ+ residents and making them feel listened to, improving support, and helping to overcome discrimination from other residents.

The guide includes:

- Definitions to facilitate understanding
- Links with legal, regulatory, and policy frameworks
- Housing and support needs of older LGBTQ+ people
- How providers can proactively and holistically support older LGBTQ+ people
- What older LGBTQ+ people experiencing discrimination and homophobia can do
- Examples and signposting to other sources of information

Case study example - a staff member showed a rainbow flag to tenants in a sheltered scheme lounge. One said, "I don't see why there are parades for Gay rights; we don't have one for not being Gay". The staff member said, "I'm Gay you know" and explained why we had Pride and were putting the flag up, and the need for people to know they could be themselves

without fear. The tenant said "I hadn't realised people might be scared to say and be who they are. Is it people like me that make them think this?" The staff member replied "No, it's a multitude of things, but supporting things like this symbol, goes a long way to telling them its ok to be who they are without needing to say it". He nodded, gave the thumbs up and walked away. Small wins lead to bigger changes.

"This guide reflects the diverse needs of our ageing population and helps housing professionals meet the needs of their LGBTQ+ communities ensuring they don't face discrimination and harassment" (Ken Johnson, Quality Officer, Riverside)

"This guide shows how many older LGBTQ+ people have been excluded or forgotten about so it's critical we work together to change this. It is an important benchmark for the housing sector in Wales" (Ian Thomas, CEO Trivallis)

Outcomes and achievements

There is much evidence highlighting the extent to which older LGBTQ+ people have experienced disadvantage and discrimination which impacts on their expectations of housing and support services. Erosh has developed a practical and accessible good practice guide focusing which encourages providers to more holistically and proactively support LGBTQ+ residents to live their life of choice free from homophobia, discrimination; to better promote themselves and their schemes as LGBTQ+ affirming; and to help overcome discrimination faced by older LGBTQ+ people from other residents.

This guide includes useful definitions to facilitate understanding as well as case study examples and

signposting to other sources of information for both providers and LGBTQ+ people. It also outlines the links with policy, legal and regulatory frameworks. It considers how to identify and monitor the particular needs of LGBTQ+ older people and the best ways of providing support; and provides advice for older LGBTQ+ older people experiencing discrimination and homophobia.

Erosh has also delivered a number of sessions focusing on this guide which have been well received. Although sheltered and retirement housing providers are committed to supporting older LGBTQ+ people, they have particularly welcomed the practical advice to turn this commitment into positive action.

DELIVERING HIGH QUALITY HOMES

Sponsored by:

BLAKE 
MORGAN

This award recognises the contribution of organisations involved in building new social and affordable homes across Wales. Homes at the cutting edge of innovation, that through their construction have not only helped meet housing need but in the process have delivered multiple benefits for the local communities in which they're situated.

Ffordd Yr Haearn

Lead organisation: Wales & West Housing

Partner organisation: Hale Construction



Statement of support

In Grangetown, Cardiff, Wales & West Housing is responding to the housing need of families and young people experiencing homelessness by developing 100 modern, energy-efficient homes in one of the most culturally diverse areas of the Welsh capital.

At Ffordd Yr Haearn WWH is transforming land that was overgrown, unused and something of a local eyesore, next door to Ikea Clive Lane and bringing it back into use with homes for social rent in the popular area of Cardiff Bay.

Built on the site of a derelict, former railway embankment, the £16 million scheme is made up of 48 one and two-bedroom apartments, 51 two, three and four-bedroom homes and 1 six-bedroom bespoke house for supported housing. All homes are built to Lifetime Homes Standards that can meet the changing accessibility needs of residents and Secured by Design Gold Standards, so residents are safe and feel safe in their homes.

WWH's long-term construction partners Hale

Construction began work on site on October 2018 and residents are expected to move in in the summer of 2021, ahead of schedule despite the site having to close during the first National Covid lockdown last year.

Innovation is at the heart of the construction. The timber frames are manufactured off-site in Neath, South Wales, by local timber frame specialists Sevenoaks Modular.

Some of the houses have been built using full modular construction methods with insulation, external cladding, doors and windows all being installed in the panels off-site.

Benefits of building timber frame homes are:

- **Speed:** they require 20 and 40 % fewer on-site labour days and homes can be made wind and water-tight in one day, reducing disruption to local communities.
- **Reduced waste:** offsite manufacturing can reduce waste by 40% on average.
- **Eco-friendly:** timber is effectively a carbon neutral product. For every cubic metre of timber used instead of other building materials, 0.8 tonnes are saved from being emitted into the atmosphere.
- **Energy efficient:** with lower running costs and reduced carbon emissions, a timber frame home can save up to 4 Tonnes of CO2 from entering the atmosphere, compared to more traditional building methods.

The development has kept ahead of the three-year construction programme as a result of these modern construction methods.

The development's name Ffordd Yr Haearn, which translates as Iron Way or Railway) is a nod to the site's heritage. The land was once the site of an old railway

siding serving the 19th Century Grangetown Iron Works, where Ikea now stands.

The development is part of WWH's commitment to develop 2,500 new homes for social rent across Wales in the next five years.

Partnership working:

Working in partnership with the young person's homeless charity Llamau, Wales & West Housing is adapting 2 x 3-bedroom houses into a purpose -

built 6-bedroom detached home to provide live-in supported accommodation for young people within the new community.

Two further properties have been specially-adapted in partnership with Cardiff Accessible Homes, to meet the specific needs of residents on their waiting list whose present homes no longer meet their needs.

Outcomes and achievements

New houses for affordable rent have been in short supply in Cardiff in recent years, this development meets housing needs in Cardiff, bringing 100 new family homes with gardens and open spaces to an area of the capital which is currently home to mostly apartment living.

WWH is working in partnership with Cardiff Council to help the authority to achieve its target of 6,500 new affordable homes across the city by 2026.

The development will:

- provide homes for people needing to downsize
- provide supported housing for young people experiencing homelessness
- bring back into use a prime site for affordable housing. Before building work started on the site almost 150,000 tonnes of soil were removed and reused on other development projects across South Wales.

Benefits to local economy and communities

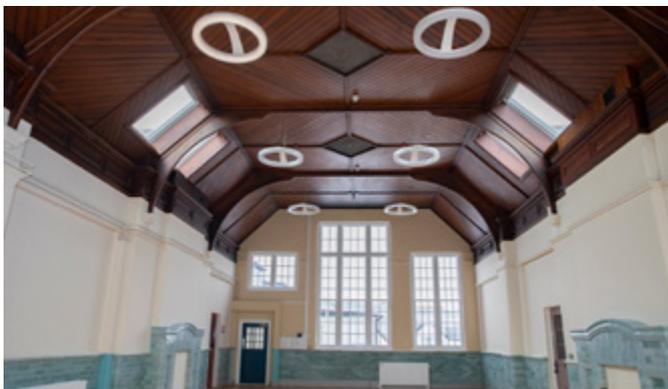
As part of the contract Hale Construction have:

- employed 5 new staff - a trainee site manager, forklift driver, 2 labourers and gateman.
- provided work experience for 3 young people and placements for 2 local people including a WWH resident
- worked with contractors Ian Williams Ltd to give back time and materials to help decorate the newly-built Grange Pavilion community and training centre so it could open and provide classes and education to local people.

Cwrt Ysgold Maelgwn

Lead organisation: Cartrefi Conwy

Partner organisation: Conwy County Borough Council



Statement of support

Ysgol Maelgwn is a Grade II listed school building in Llandudno Junction that was looking for a new lease of life after its pupils moved to another building.

Cartrefi Conwy teamed up with Conwy County Borough Council to look at how they could transform

this beautiful building and its surrounding area into much needed, quality homes for tenants with a range of specialist needs.

Through early engagement with our contractor, Social Services teams, Cadw and the conservation department we were able to draw up plans for 27 new homes which included a five bedroom house and five bedroom bungalow for young families with physical disabilities, bespoke apartments for residents with Learning Disabilities as well as homes with shared facilities for young care leavers. These plans were really positively received by local residents during our pre-planning consultation sessions and work started on the scheme in March 2019.

With Conwy County facing an ageing population, the demand for adapted properties has grown exponentially over recent years with 27 people on the Disability Service Accommodation list and 98 households with complex, specialist housing needs on the social housing register.

A multi-partner Project Board and team was established at the start of the project to make sure the

homes were designed to meet the changing needs of a range of clients whilst ensuring the build programme stayed on time and budget.

“Having access to support when needed and freedom to live independently is critical to maintaining and enhancing people’s wellbeing. The site is perfectly located in the heart of the village, close to amenities and as an important landmark in the community. The collaboration on the scheme has been exemplary, and ensured that all properties are suitably adapted for tenants.” Claire Lister, Integrated Adult and Community Services – Conwy CBC.

The site came with numerous challenges in converting it to residential use. The main school building has a range of beautiful original features, such as enamel wall tiles, vaulted ceilings and parquet flooring that required sensitive restoration whilst still providing ten new apartments for people with learning disabilities. We also had to ensure that any new structures complimented the look and feel of the old school building.

The interior decoration has been carefully designed so that each of the 10 flats are distinguishable by colour. This re-enforces familiarity for some of the tenants with complex needs. Other features included embossed signage and numerals and RNIB compliant contrasting kitchen material colours.

They follow the footprint of the old school classrooms which means we haven’t had to divide the original spaces and have kept the old school hall intact.

At the centre of the development is a beautifully designed therapeutic horticultural garden for all residents to enjoy. We have worked with pupils at the local school who have painted pictures of herbs that are now being transposed onto tiles in the new garden.

We work really hard on all our new developments to ensure the local community sees real benefits from the work we are doing and maximising our social impact is a central theme when procuring for our development sites. Brenig construction, the principal contractor on the Maelgwn site, have led on a number of projects in the local community including building a new roof and re-tarmacking the local social club and installing a new disabled toilet in the town’s memorial hall.

This development has breathed new life into a beautiful but redundant building in the heart of a thriving community. It has also provided its new residents with a secure, purpose built home to call their own.

You can find out more about what difference this development has had here:

www.cwrtmaelgwn.info

Outcomes and achievements

Cartrefi Conwy is committed to providing local employment and skills development opportunities in everything that we do. 197 of the people employed through this development lived in Wales and 124 of these lived in the county of Conwy.

Phil secured a trainee tiler position on the scheme through our Creating Future’s Employment Academy and had the important task of reconditioning the thousands of original tiles in the school building:

“I had done construction in college but never actually worked in construction. Its exceeded my expectations and I’m really enjoying this new opportunity. I’m a bit of a perfectionist and I like it when things look really good at the end of the job. I’m much more confident in myself”

The Glennon family moved into a five bedroom bungalow on the site. The family had struggled to find suitable accommodation following a life altering diagnosis that has led to Mr Glennon being wheelchair bound. Mrs Glennon told us:

“It’s made a massive difference, it’s changed our lives and we don’t say that lightly. Our children are in Conwy schools and their friends all live here in the area, we can already see its benefitted their mental health and school work being in a better environment. I can’t thank Cartrefi Conwy enough, they’ve been great with us.”

High quality local homes at The Hedgerows in Pennard, Gower

Lead organisation: Coastal Housing

Partner organisation: Jehu Group; Down to Earth



Statement of support

The land owner of what would become the Hedgerows first approached Coastal Housing Group in 2014. The site presented particular challenges because it was located within the Gower Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, meaning that virgin land could only be built upon in exceptional circumstances. After working closely with the local planning authority, the field, previously used for grazing horses, was eventually included as one of only 6 rural exception sites in Swansea's Local Development Plan (LDP), adopted in 2019. The LDP identified a need for 300 new homes in the 'Gower fringe' zone before 2025 with only 161 identified. Only after this inclusion in the LDP could planning consent for the site finally be sought.

Obtaining planning consent meant further close work with the local planning authority in order to ensure that the designs for the site were in accordance with the Gower AONB Design Guide, meaning that the new development had to preserve the rural and historical character of the AONB. Whilst the site was designated 'greenfield' with few difficulties associated with prior uses, its location entailed challenges due to the required lower densities, materials and finishes which

were required to be of a quality to reflect the situation of the development. Roofs had to have a natural slate appearance with chimney stacks. A variety of finishes from stone, brick and smooth and rough-cast render were all required throughout the site.

The site, roughly 5.5 acres, accommodates 70 homes, including 19 homes for social rent and 17 low-cost home ownership products. 34 are for sale on the open market. With total project costs approaching £15m, developing the site involved a great deal of risk on Coastal's part because there was to be no capital grant support - the income from the sale of homes on the site and long-term rental income is projected to be sufficient to cover the capital costs of the development. Crucially for quality, the social rented homes at the site are still constructed to the Welsh Government's Development Quality Requirements.

According to the requirements of the local authority, all homes had to be sold or let only to persons with a local connection. This condition proved to be no barrier to the site selling faster than any projections. The site shows how a high-quality, mixed-tenure development can succeed in a semi-rural location.

Late in the development plans, the opportunity arose to change 6 of the social rented houses for 6 low-energy homes, to be constructed from locally-sourced materials by Down to Earth. Down to Earth is a Gower-based non-profit organization that uses construction as a form of therapy, and the 6 houses they have built for Coastal at Pennard were worked upon by people at risk of isolation, including those with brain injuries, former service personnel and asylum seekers. The houses are constructed from Welsh timber, both structurally and externally. Each home also has its own solar PV array and battery, meaning that running costs for the eventual tenants will be as low as possible. These homes will achieve an EPC rating of A. During construction, this part of the development attracted sufficient attention to be visited by the First Minister of Wales, Mark Drakeford, and Leader of Her Majesty's Opposition, Sir Kier Starmer.

Outcomes and achievements

The site manager for the main build at Pennard, Tom Dennis of Jehu, has recently won an NHBC award for his work at the site. Pride in the Job awards recognize site managers who have achieved the very highest standards in housebuilding across the UK.

All properties available for sale on the site have now been reserved to people with a local connection. 8 of the social rented homes have so far been let, again to people with a local connection. Coastal was delighted to discover that one of these homes has been let to someone who volunteered with the Down to Earth project on-site and who helped build the eco-homes

on site that in time will be occupied by his neighbours.

The Down To Earth homes have proven that stunning, sustainable homes can be built with local materials and a local supply chain.

Across the entire build, the scheme has also delivered significant community benefits including:

182 training opportunities

28 jobs created for local people, including via sub-contractors

9 apprenticeships created

The Mill, Canton

Lead organisation: Lovell Partnerships Ltd

Partner organisation: Tirion Homes, Cadwyn Housing Association, Principality Building Society & Welsh Government



Statement of support

The Mill, Wales' largest regeneration programme is delivering 800 mixed tenure homes on the former 53 acre Arjo Wiggins Pater Mill site which closed over 20 years ago taking with it hundreds of jobs. Today it's delivering 442 high quality affordable homes and the creation of over 1000 jobs during the development phases. To date the project has successfully delivered 358 homes for open market sale and 180 affordable homes across two phases. As the third phase gets underway with the construction of a further 105 affordable homes for Tirion Homes and Cadwyn we can see how it has evolved since construction began in January 2017 along with the factors that underpin its success and how The Mill has become a beacon of social transformation in this vibrant city.

The Mill is about giving people choice. The choice to be able to live in an affordable home in a city they love. It sounds simple doesn't it? Buy all too often housing developments and indeed, housing providers can sometimes lose sight of this simple notion, putting economic considerations ahead of people. From day one, working closely with our partners, Tirion, Cadwyn Housing Association, Principality Building Society, and with funding support from Welsh Government, we have remained true to the original vision - to build excellent quality homes for people, to create jobs throughout the duration of the build programme and ultimately, to leave behind a strong community legacy that will thrive for many decades to come.

The 442 affordable homes are split across social rent, discounted rent and private rental properties and this scheme is about as far away from constructing square, soulless boxes as you can imagine. The partnership team is made up of a broad number of stakeholders and while that alone comes with complexity, establishing the right delivery team from the outset has made this complex scheme, less complicated. We talk a lot in construction about collaboration and partnership and the partnership team here at The Mill has enabled us to achieve significant progress which has remained true to the original vision.

The Mill is most certainly a complex scheme that goes way beyond just the building of homes. The scheme also includes a community hall, parks and beautiful tree-lined avenues. Whilst the infrastructure and environment lends itself perfectly to the development of a new, vibrant community we also recognise that through the provision of training opportunities and apprenticeships we can further enhance the social value of this scheme.

Innovation:

Three of the affordable homes have been integrated with low/zero carbon technologies and other improvements as part of a pilot scheme to show the benefits for residents. These homes are also part of the flatline research project, demonstrating domestic demand side response to the grid.

Each of these homes have integrated photovoltaics, battery and thermal storage and heat pumps which having been coordinated through the construction to be intelligently integrated and commissioned by Sero Homes. This ensures a whole home energy system working as one and the capacity of the residents to use the Sero Life platform to effortlessly ensure their comfort.

Testimonials:

We are thrilled with our new house at The Mill, it's a great size, light airy and already feels like home. It was great to move into our new home at the same time as our neighbours, it makes getting to know everyone so much easier and builds a lovely community feel. One of the things that attracted us to The Mill was the security renting from Tirion Homes and Cadwyn gives us, which is so important when you have a young family - Vanessa Oldham, Cadwyn Tenant.

Outcomes and achievements

- NHBC Pride in the Job Award 2020
- Insider Property Awards - Development of the Year Award 2019
- NHBC Pride in the Job 2018 Quality Award
- NHBC - Seal of Excellence Award 2018
- First Time Buyer Readers' Awards - Best First Time Buyer Family Home 2018
- One of the largest successes so far has been our 'Get into Construction' course, delivered in conjunction with the Prince's Trust. 16 local unemployed young adults were given the opportunity to improve their employability prospects.
- The Grow Well Project with patients from the doctor's surgery - a new patio garden with wheelchair access and continuing to support their scheme helping patients to learn to plant and grow while gaining friends and helping them get over illness.
- Created a bike shed to securely store all the school's bikes at Ysgol Gymraeg Treganna on Sanatorium Road, tarmacked a new walkway for the safety of parents and guardians as they collect their children and challenged the pupils with a project to name one of the streets on the development.
- Supported the Caerau and Ely festival, participated in the 'Give and Gain Initiative' where 5 of our staff volunteered as referees at the Cardiff Blues annual tag rugby festival and raised over £1400 for Cancer Research Wales in the Cardiff Dragon Boat Festival.
- Refurbished the changing rooms at the Jubilee Park in Canton.

Ymyl Yr Afon

Lead organisation: Lovell

Partner organisation: Merthyr Tydfil HA, Hafod, Merthyr Tydfil CBC, Welsh Government



Statement of support

Ymyl Yr Afon is a mixed tenure development, regeneration development bringing 153 much-needed new homes to a former colliery site. The old Merthyr Vale Colliery has been transformed with 110 two-, three-, and four-bedroom homes for open market sale and 43 one-, two-, three- and four bedroom affordable houses and apartments.

Lovell purchased the site from Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council (MTCBC) in March 2018 after submitting a joint bid with partners, Methyr Tydfil Housing Association (MTHA) and Hafod. Works commenced in the summer 2018 and works are due to complete in August 2021.

Specifically designed to meet the needs of local people, the development at Ymyl Yr Afon is offering high-quality homes for a range of buyers with the affordable homes being delivered for social rent through MTHA. The planning policy requirement for affordable homes on this development was 5% affordable housing provision but by working in partnership with MTHA, Hafod and Welsh Government we were able to secure Social Housing Grant Funding to delivery over and above, totalling 28% affordable housing.

This new development is the latest stage in the reinvention of the former colliery, which closed in 1989, through a major regeneration programme delivered by MTCBC with the support of the Welsh Government. Key elements to date have included the construction of a new access road, Golwg yr Afon, which runs through the housing site and a brand new primary school, Ynysowen Community Primary School, close by. Now the site, which has lain empty for a number of years, will help tackle the lack of new homes in the County Borough Council area.

Several plots have been delivered using Fasthouse - an offsite manufacturer of hybrid and closed panel timber frame building systems. The closed panel system comes to site fully closed with external and party wall insulation fitted, plumbed and pre-wired with electric conduits and boxes, windows and doors fitted, and plaster boarded internally. This system allowed us to achieve a watertight structure in just over a day and has the potential to reduce a traditional build programme from 25 to 18 weeks.

Senior Site Manager Paul Haden for the Ymyl Yr Afon development is celebrating his second win at this year's NHBC (National House Building Council) Pride in the Job Quality Awards, following his first win in 2020. Paul Haden has been selected from a field of more than 10,000 UK site managers and is now amongst 450 who have won a Quality Award, representing the top 5% of those who entered. Paul has now received a Quality Award two years in a row, after also winning last year for the Ymyl yr Afon development. As the most highly regarded competition in the industry, the Pride in the Job Awards celebrate the vital role that site managers play in the building of high quality new homes, ensuring they are delivered on time, on safe sites and to exacting construction standards.

Testimonials:

"The scheme will provide 43 units of affordable housing for rent and will provide a significant boost for the area, both by helping to meet local housing needs and through the creation of employment and training

opportunities. We are committed to the regeneration of communities and we are delighted to be working in partnership with Lovell on this exciting development." Karen Courts, Chief Executive, Merthyr Tydfil Housing Association.

"I am pleased that the Welsh Government was able to support Merthyr Tydfil Housing Association in developing 43 affordable homes on this site, and this will be a significant contribution to meeting some of the housing needs in the area." Dawn Bowden, AM - Welsh Government

"It's a very welcome sign of confidence in the local community that these new homes are being developed by Lovell, and Dawn I were pleased to meet local families who are already moving into the properties as they're completed". Gerald Jones, MP - Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney

Outcomes and achievements

- Two consecutive NHBC Pride in the Job Quality Awards 2020 and 2021
- Two local apprentices working on the development.
- Awarded with Highly Commended at the recent Go Awards which recognises the contribution we have made to date and are continuing to make in the local area.
- Extensive community engagement has taken place with many community benefits including visits to local schools for Health and Safety talks.

"As you may be aware, as well as it being a quality development that is an excellent example of physical regeneration, it is also having a positive social impact on the area and as well as the much needed infrastructure improvements it has given a new dynamic to this part of Merthyr Vale and Aberfan. The Council worked hard to bring this site forward for many years against the challenges its previous land use presented along with flooding issues in the area, so we are really pleased with the outcomes" Judith Jones, Chief Planning Officer - Merthyr Council CBC.

Golwg Y Bryn, Ebbw Vale

Lead organisation: Lovell

Partner organisation: Melin Homes, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council, Welsh Government



Statement of support

Golwg Y Bryn is a £16.8M scheme which is located at Bryn Serth, Ebbw Vale on the town's north-western outskirts. This development was brought forward in partnership with Lovell, Melin Homes, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council and Welsh Government. Construction on the former quarry began in summer 2019 and the final handovers are due in August 2021. This project has provided 70 open market homes for sale and 30 affordable properties, comprising social rent and low cost home ownership. The mixed tenure range of two, three and four - bedroom homes has created a new community for this area, whilst addressing the increasing pressure to provide decent, sustainable homes for the people who need them.

The local community had not seen mixed-tenure homes built in Ebbw Vale for over a decade and this was one of the key drivers for Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council and Welsh Government supporting the scheme with £2.8M of social housing grant to deliver 30% affordable housing which is over and above standard planning policy of 10% affordable housing for this area. A strong partnership approach helped to demonstrate and encourage confidence to develop mixed tenure especially open market. It has met a pent-up demand in the area and demonstrated such development can work and has since stimulated further interest and development in the area.

Providing homes in Blaenau Gwent is an important part of the Local Authority's Regeneration and growth ambition; with significant investment in attracting new business and growing indigenous companies, ensuring a range of quality homes are provided is integral.

The development has brought fresh benefits for the local economy and community. It has created a significant number of training and job opportunities, as well as a series of community projects. Local Meet the Buyer Events were arranged and many local SME's worked on the development including Taylor Lane from Nantyglo who supplied a hybrid timber frame solution which was delivered to site pre-insulated with serviced batons, therefore part MMC.

The site was a former quarry so innovative design around build has been paramount to the success of the scheme. The site comprised different foundations structures which included standard strip foundations to the north of the site, rocksoil piling method to the centre of the site where the quarry face is situated and turn and compact method to the lower end of the site. Originally the scheme was due to be developed through traditional masonry build but due to the severe weather experienced in Ebbw Vale, impact of Covid and demand for new homes, all of the new homes have been built using timber frame. Despite the impact of Covid the scheme is due to complete on time and to budget. Lovell used innovative ways by installing robust Covid measures such as thermal imaging cameras on site which gave our supply chain the confidence to return to work.

The Bryn Serth scheme is excellent news for Blaenau Gwent as it is a great example of how collaborative working can benefit people and communities.

"This is a great example of how working in partnership can benefit communities and the local economy, allowing people to get on the property ladder whilst also creating many additional training and job opportunities. I am delighted that work has begun on this project, in which Welsh Government has invested £2.8m. The 30 affordable homes, developed through partnership with Lovell Homes, Melin and Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council, will provide people with safe, warm and secure homes - a key priority for this Welsh Government. These homes will contribute towards our commitment to build 20,000 affordable homes during this Assembly term and I'm looking forward to seeing this development take shape." Julie James, Minister for Climate Change - Welsh Government

"This development has made the dream of buying a home a reality for more people. It will also offer an affordable rental option. We are very proud to have been part of this collaboration which will benefit people and communities in Blaenau Gwent." Paula Kennedy, Chief Executive of Melin Homes

Outcomes and achievements

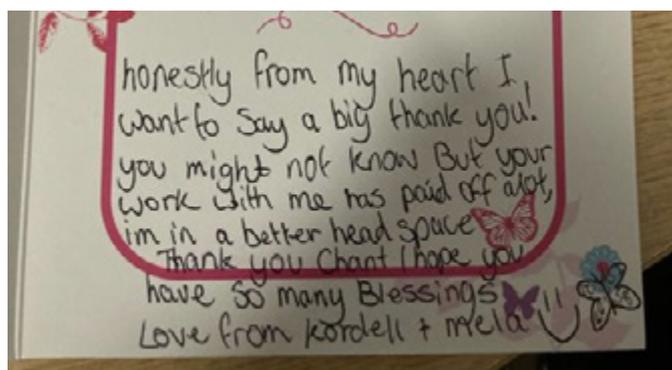
- The Bryn Serth Development has created a high-quality mixed tenure development which provides an oversupply of affordable housing provision (an increase from 10% to 30%).
- Working with Y Prentis, 5 apprentice placements were provided throughout the project build.
- 75% of supply chain working on the development was from a 20-mile radius of the development.
- Working with Ebbw Vale Rugby Football Club the site team tarmacked a new drive and pavement which provided easier access to attend the club.
- Meet the Buyer events encouraged local supply chain to work on the development.
- Visits to the local schools providing career talks on the construction industry.
- This development changed BGCBC's direction of travel in terms of the approach to building new homes. It demonstrated what we all knew... that there was and still is demand, in terms helping to stimulate further development and provide market confidence, overcoming the myth over you can't develop successfully above the snowline!

HOUSING TEAM OF THE YEAR

This award is for a team who have delivered an outstanding contribution to their organisation and for the housing sector. It is designed to recognise achievement of something special, as part of developing new services, dealing with difficult situations or delivering the best services.

Supported Housing Team

Cadwyn Housing Association



Statement of support

Cadwyn H.A. run two supported housing projects based in Cardiff. Hafan is a 9-bed semi-independent project for young parents with children under 5 years old. Nightingale House is a 24/7 project with 26 bedrooms for families experiencing homelessness. Both projects are psychologically informed environments and we support residents and staff in a trauma informed way.

As an organisation we had been planning for the possibility of lockdown measures for several weeks. However, we were quickly thrown in at the deep end as we had a number of staff who were displaying symptoms and a number of staff who had to shield. As a result, in the first 5 weeks of lockdown only 38% of the team were available. This resulted in huge pressure on the team to keep the services running. It is testimony to their dedication and commitment that the services remained open.

There were a number of residents at Nightingale House and Hafan who displayed symptoms. All residents had young children living with them. It is very difficult from a practical and wellbeing point of view to try to enforce Mum and toddlers to stay in one bedroom for 14 days. The team were acutely

aware of the impact this was likely to have on their wellbeing and were quickly able to make up activity packs for families which had board games, colouring books, arts and craft materials. Staff also continued to run activities to these children via facetime. We also ensured families had enough food, prepared meals for them and had regularly phone contact to ensure they were ok.

Given the risks of the possibility of Covid spreading easily in hostel settings, within the first two weeks of lockdown, Cardiff Council were able to move 12 families out of Nightingale House into their own accommodation. We usually have approx. 3 move outs a month so this was a massive increase. All of these move outs were to unfurnished properties so support workers had to try to ensure we could access some essential items for move outs which brought about challenges due to shops being closed/limited items available/delays in delivery times etc. This trend has continued since March and we still average 8 move outs a month.

We have reduced to a bubble skeleton staff rota with 2 members of staff in the project at any one time with the remainder of the team working from home. We were able to secure funding from the Welsh Gov Emergency Pandemic Fund to secure items such as tablets for the residents to help them stay connected during lockdown. This has been really beneficial so the team can continue supporting residents even while not on the premises.

Before Covid, we only worked with families experiencing homelessness. However, given the efforts to ensure no-one is sleeping rough during the pandemic we have been accepting referrals for single people and young people. Since March we have supported over 30 young and single people. This has brought its own challenges.

Some of the single residents have a long history of homelessness with the accompanying support issues

of substance use and mental health. Given that we are currently working on a reduced staffing rota, this has resulted in an impressive effort from staff to continue high levels of support to these residents. In addition during this period we have had an increase in residents fleeing domestic abuse. We have also had

20 families who have Children's services involvement. We have had to balance the needs of families already living in Nightingale House alongside the new residents who have moved in during lockdown.

Outcomes and achievements

We know all our residents will have experienced trauma and the importance connections and relationships have to build resilience. Residents were concerned that 'social' distancing meant they could not leave their rooms. We have reframed language to 'safe' and 'physical' distancing. The team have been able to continue running activities such as safe distanced quizzes, treasure hunts & crafts.

Conflict between families and single people was taking up a lot of staff time. We introduced a weekly 'circle check in in which all participants are equal e.g. we were having significant issues with cannabis use on the premises. One resident talked about the impact the smell was having on her son who is autistic and

very sensitive towards smells. The person smoking cannabis was part of the circle. The circle had a very productive outcome with all parties aware of the reasons behind behaviour and the impact behaviour was having on others. The issue was resolved as a direct result of the check in circle. All staff have reported that resident conflict has drastically reduced, we have had zero incidents of verbal or physical aggression since May and residents are bringing their concerns to check in instead. This has not only equipped residents with the skills to build, restore and repair relationships alongside problem solving, it has resulted in staff having more time to deal with planned support.

Newydd Housing's Community Regeneration Team

Newydd Housing Association



Statement of support

Newydd's Community Regeneration Team's vision is 'working together to make a difference for our tenants/communities of interest through involvement, tackling disadvantage and social exclusion to build sustainable resilient communities'. They continually strive to work in partnership with tenants to improve the organisation's performance and sharing resources with partners has enabled them to help more people, ensure value for money and achieve many valuable outcomes.

Newydd operates across 5 local and the team ensures that bespoke local offers are crafted around issues facing each area. To meet strategic objectives, the team deliver inclusive interventions to meet the diverse needs of customers under the following themes:

DIGITAL INCLUSION - Various activities and tailored help is offered by staff and our volunteer Digital Champions to help increase skills/confidence; our 'Loan IT' scheme makes IT affordable; FB portals/ Alexas were installed in communal lounges at our independent living schemes to enable easy access to meetings/activities and tackle social isolation; virtual reality goggles are also available to loan (these have been linked to an under the desk exercise bike to improve fitness

EMPLOYABILITY - Opportunity Knocks is partnership project that designs training programmes for those living in the Vale. Participants gain new skills, accredited relevant qualifications and have improved confidence and move closer to employment.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING - Hapi, our lottery funded project, offers a wide range of free, easily accessible community based and online health and wellbeing/employability related activities. Participants are empowered, upskilled, gain qualifications/ employment, more confident, have improved health and mental, emotional and physical wellbeing. Hapi also coordinate other innovative projects - the Fit Bit project, GetFitWales and Schoogle (a magazine created by talented pupils)

TENANT INVOLVEMENT & SCRUTINY - Newydd has a long-established collaborative partnership with their involved tenants who they consider integral to service design, development and implementation and achieve amazing outcomes for everyone involved e.g. Tenant Scheme Assessors help improve the

physical environment for the visually impaired; tenants mystery shop front-line services; estate ambassadors accompany surveyors on inspections; tenants sit on staff interview panels. Newydd are most proud of their tenant Scrutiny Group who this year celebrate their 10-year anniversary. In November, they held their first online tenant conference. Making this digital shift enabled them to look at several areas of service at once and make quicker recommendations

COMMUNITY BENEFITS - All Newydd's contracts over £50,000 have community benefit clauses which help us to deliver projects that future proof our housing stock and our tenants' futures. Targeted recruitment and training opportunities/apprenticeships are offered to tenants to help them into employment.

PHYSICAL REGENERATION - Last year, the first physical regeneration project at Poets Close, Rhydyfelin, was delivered. Major works were undertaken to address identified issues through

design solutions/improvements in management e.g. installation of CCTV, encasing stairwells, installing biometric door-entry systems, redesigned bin-stores/pathways and improved lighting. Improvements have impacted on tenants' health and wellbeing, reduced crime/ASB and brought the community together.

TENANCY READY - This partnership training programme helps reduce tenancy failures, encourages tenant retention, improves tenant satisfaction and ultimately maximises rental income and since the start of lockdown has been delivered online using google classrooms.

As Buddha said "success is not the key to happiness, happiness is the key to success. If you love what you are doing, you will be successful". Newydd are very lucky to have a team of creative, inspiring and dedicated individuals who absolutely love what they do and genuinely want to make a positive difference for Newydd's tenants and communities.

Outcomes and achievements

Newydd's innovative and dedicated Community Regeneration team puts tenants/communities at the heart of everything they do. They adopt a co-production approach to make a positive difference through involvement, tackling disadvantage/inequalities to build sustainable resilient communities. The team's genuine passion has earned them an excellent reputation in the sector.

The team quickly and successfully adapted working methods to meet challenges the pandemic brought e.g. tenancy-ready/employability courses were delivered through google platforms, wellbeing activities were facilitated on Facebook and a tenant scrutiny conference was co-ordinated on Facebook.

The team are friendly, empathetic and enthusiastic and rise to any challenge e.g. at the start of the lockdown they were tasked with updating tenants' equality and diversity records whilst also identifying vulnerable tenants who needed additional support.

For a small team of 9 covering 5 local authorities, their achievements are outstanding. They have an amazing work ethic and are proud that through the opportunities they offer, participants are more empowered; closer to the job-market; fitter/healthier; socially/digitally included; have improved skills/knowledge; and are able to make a real and effective difference to Newydd's services.

Housing First

Cardiff Council



Statement of support

As the pandemic hit it forced providers to change the way in which services operated. The Housing First Team support the most complex in our society as they are supported from the streets, prison or temporary placement into permanent housing.

There were serious concerns about how the pandemic would impact our clients and the team ensured everyone was supported to remain in their accommodation whilst ensuring Health and Well being was considered through the most challenging of times. Moving into your own accommodation can be difficult but the stresses of the pandemic and the support needs left the clients vulnerable.

The Housing First Team showed exceptional commitment and skill to the clients who found themselves isolating and cut off from wider society. This included ensuring all clients were contacted daily to reduce isolation and provision of food packs so clients had access to essentials. The team worked across a 7 day period and door stepped visited clients to ensure that that loneliness and isolation could be reduced as much as possible.

In addition to the pandemic, the team had to continue with the day job of providing holistic support in the areas of housing, substance misuse, mental health, Criminal justice, physical health and financial well-being. As restrictions were changed so did there

service. The team have an ethos of doing whatever it takes to safeguard clients and support them to maintain their accommodation.

The team have also been working hard to secure Private rented tenancies for clients and have demonstrated commitment as pressure on housing has seen landlords leave the market and demand higher prices for the properties. The team have continued to find properties and work with landlords to ensure a supply that meets demand. The team have also started to work with the internal council allocations team to increase supply through the council.

Growth of this project is vital to ensure more people are supported out of homelessness. So the team did not stop targeting other potential candidates for the scheme and worked along side other housing providers, including the hotels taken over to support other rough sleepers, to ensure people who had been supported off streets had appropriate housing to ensure they did not need return. This included some clients who had been rough sleeping for many years who had never had their own accommodation.

The team also established a side project focusing on providing support for those EEA nationals with no recourse. The team set up two houses using money from Welsh Government to ensure this vulnerable group found accommodation. The long term purpose of this project was to provide temporary housing with a view of supporting clients into long term housing and also support them to secure employment. The successes of this scheme have been outlined below.

Aimee and her dedicated team have been the unsung hero's of this pandemic and they should be proud of all they have achieved this year. It has been difficult to sum up the impact they have had on some of the most complex and marginalised people within our society and they deserve to be nominated for this award. They have continued to exceed their targets, maintain accommodation and break the cycle of homelessness whilst growing the project through the most challenging of times.

Outcomes and achievements

The team have supported a total 32 complex clients through the pandemic. Of this 9 new clients were supported into accommodation by Housing first through the pandemic.

94% of clients are maintaining their tenancy and the cycle of homelessness has been broken for them.

93% of clients displayed an improvement in their physical health, 100% of individuals who displayed increased stability in their mental health, 93% saw increased stability in their levels of Substance misuse and 100% of clients saw an overall improvement to

their financial well being.

There is initial evidence that the scheme saves mainstream services a great deal of money and reduces pressures that clients previously placed on them. The scheme are now embarking on a cost analysis task to demonstrate this in a more formal way.

14 EEA nationals supported into accommodation with 5 individuals securing Private rented accommodation and 8 people securing employment.

Welfare Team

Grŵp Cynefin



Statement of support

Grŵp Cynefin's Welfare Team is made up of four members of staff who offer a financial advice service for tenants.

A key aspect of the assistance the Welfare Team provides includes enabling tenants to access services such as Health and Social Care, Social Security Benefits, Discretionary Assistance Schemes, Free School Meals, Charitable Hardship funds and Food Banks. Helping tenants to navigate between both Westminster and Welsh Governments benefit systems is an important part of our work, essentially, making sure our tenants do not fall through the cracks in the system.

With the Welfare Team embracing the challenges that came in the wake of the Covid Pandemic, all team members now working from home, providing advice and guidance to tenants in seven local authority areas in north Wales and Powys. Referrals are received directly from tenants, colleagues, and partner support agencies, working closely with Local Authorities, Citizens Advice and DWP.

Darren Thomas the Welfare Team Leader noted that "Covid has disproportionately impacted those further down the Socio-economic scale. An historical lack of financial resilience coupled with the closure of the hospitality and tourism sectors has impacted many of our tenants. I believe that the Welfare Team's 'wrap around' service to Grŵp Cynefin tenants has been instrumental in mitigating many of the impacts of the pandemic on our financially vulnerable tenants."

The team's immediate response to the Covid outbreak was swift and substantive - responding immediately to support tenants facing an acute drop in income due to restrictions designed to control the spread of the Covid virus.

An emerging new client group, those who had been employed suddenly finding themselves in a crisis, not knowing where to turn. Furlough, Self-Employment Income Support Scheme, Redundancy, as well as an abrupt loss of income within a largely seasonal labour market, were the presenting issues of the day. During this period, the Welfare Team were frequently digesting changes to Social Welfare Law in the morning and advising tenants on the very issue the same afternoon!

Reassurance was the order of the day, as well as understanding who does what and when, working across a largely rural area of north Wales, the Welfare Team had to quickly identify local and regional support networks that could deliver vital supplies, such as food packages and prescriptions to those unable to leave their homes.

In 2020-21 The Welfare Team secured over £1m in additional income for our tenants, through income maximisation and other work. Helping tenants to make over 600 successful applications to the Discretionary Assistance Fund, providing food and clothing and essential household items for individuals, couples and families in crisis.

Anthony Poglettke has lived in a Grŵp Cynefin property in Flintshire for nine years. He says:

"I first received help a few years ago after a bleed on the brain put me out of work for a while.

"They helped with me with my living costs, applying for benefits and filling out forms on-line. They also assisted me to cancel direct debits I could no longer afford which helped to take the pressure off.

"The whole team is fantastic and keep in touch with me on a weekly basis, even via text and email.

"It can be a difficult and scary thing to admit you need help, but they listen to you and understand. I don't know what I would have done without them."

This week Miss Diane Etheridge a tenant from Rhyl said "Thank you I am off to the food bank shortly! This has been an awful month so we're both grateful for your help in getting through it!"

Outcomes and achievements

A social return on an investment assessment of the Welfare Team's work in May 2020 found that for every £1 spent on the service, there was a benefit of £14.10.

If the monetary value of the added benefits received have on the local economy is included, the impact and added value created is £16.74 for every £1 invested in the service.

Vitaly, the officers have also seen behavioural changes and improvements in tenants' wellbeing after receiving the service, such as.

Improved quality of life

Increased confidence

Positive relationships formed with professional staff

Improved family relationships

Readiness to receive additional support from other agencies i.e. by being signposted to other services that can also provide support

Greater financial control

Less stress - happier tenants

Helping 606 tenants during 2020-21, which is a 47% increase from the previous year. This significant increase in demand for the Welfare Teams Services is due to the impact of Covid and social distancing regulations, and is a significant achievement in our view for a small team of four.

Adra's Neighbourhood Services Team

Adra



Statement of support

The biggest challenge was how to re-mobilise Adra's frontline team during lockdown; Adra's Supported Housing Team were conducting three visits per week funded by the Welsh Government's Supported Housing Grant. In response to the National Lockdown, the decision was made in early March 2020 to stop these visits to protect Adra's residents. Over 65s were identified as the most vulnerable and those on the Government's shielding list, with the Neighbourhood Services team contacting close to 2,000 people, using redeployed staff to put in courtesy calls, checking if residents had family and friends who can support them. In terms of delivering services to residents, colleagues also needed to remain motivated; a lot miss the camaraderie of meeting colleagues. Managers were encouraged to have weekly informal catch-ups with members of their team, to ask them how they were and about their family via Zoom. Geraint Jones, Neighbourhood Services Manager - Adra, said: "This was a real test for our team, transferring their skills to work in a different way. If someone had asked me in February 2020, how could you mobilise such a frontline tenant facing service to work from home, I would have said you couldn't do it, but it's been done. The way our team has adapted,

to still do their job but in a different way is a massive testament to them." Impact and difference to people's lives Partnerships and links were crucial to deliver services during COVID, using support networks in Bangor and Caernarfon to manage drop-offs for customers. Adra reached out to find potential partners, forming the Gwynedd Resilience Network of volunteers, meeting weekly to respond to needs arising from the community, for example, providing support to local volunteer groups and food bank donations. Video calling was introduced through Adra's tenancy support service, providing much valued face-to-face contact for tenants with their support worker. Feedback from Adra resident; "It means a lot to me that you phone me every week just to check I'm OK." Kathleen Hughes, Supported Housing Officer - Adra, added: "I build relationships with our tenants, providing help, support and reassurance to them and their families, which I find a really rewarding aspect of my job. Hearing customers say how my support has genuinely helped them during the pandemic, when sometimes they didn't know which way to turn, gives me the best feeling." Alan Davies, Community Housing Coordinator - Adra, said: "The hard work of my team in partnership with North Wales Police, disturbing and reducing the impact of County Lines crime in our communities has been extremely rewarding, so much so that County Lines organised crime has been almost completely eradicated in the area. One of the best parts of my job is helping those in need of our services in their neighbourhoods, addressing any concerns they may have, ultimately making them feel safer in their homes and communities." Geraint Jones, Adra's Neighbourhood Services Manager, said: "In terms of lockdown delivery, we're not going to go back to old ways; we've become more agile. We've been reborn as an outcome based service, rather than looking at a percentage of time spent on a particular job. I've learnt as a manager about delivery having to take different forms." Inspector John Aspinall, of Gwynedd North District Police, added: "The support we get

from Adra is exceptional, significantly helping those residing in our community, especially the vulnerable who need safeguarding." Councillor Dafydd Morgan, of Gwynedd Council, said: "As I walked through one of

your estates I noticed a clean up had been undertaken that was needed. I'm proud to give appreciation and thanks to your department."

Outcomes and achievements

Adra surveyed tenants during June 2020 through welfare calls, via its Call Centre, Adra's customer survey panel and sharing survey links through social media channels; 307 responses were received and 83% were satisfied with the support received. A recent survey carried out by Mustard research for Adra, shows customer satisfaction for supported housing has increased to 96% throughout 2020/21. Welfare calls made to nearly 2,000 elderly and vulnerable tenants. Worked with Gwynedd Council supporting 850 Adra tenants on the NHS Shielded list to receive weekly food boxes during Covid lockdown. Called every tenant, making referrals on behalf of 350 for them to receive weekly emergency food boxes throughout

the shielding period. Created an Adra Covid Hardship Fund, with £50,000 allocated to support tenants and communities facing financial and wellbeing hardship; 24 projects supported to date. Projects included local food schemes and wellbeing initiatives such as family craft kits and mindfulness packs. More than 60 tenants were paired with a volunteer buddy. Worked in partnership to provide and deliver Personal Protective Equipment to volunteer networks and key workers in Gwynedd. Provided £15,000 in financial support to food banks and supported with collection and delivery of food donations from businesses across Gwynedd.

LEADERSHIP

This award is for an individual, and its purpose is to recognise excellent leadership in the sector. It aims to demonstrate the quality of leaders that we have in housing, and to show the rest of the world how brilliant housing people are.

Gavin Harvey, sustainability and conservation coordinator

Coastal Housing



Statement of support

At Coastal Housing leadership doesn't always just come from above. Gavin Harvey joined Coastal Housing Group in 2013 as a caretaker in Coastal's estates team. During his five years as Caretaker, Gavin became increasingly conscious of the environmental damage he was causing while maintaining landscapes. At the time, Gavin was studying Horticulture with the RHS, and was inspired by a module on sustainable horticulture. Gavin decided to use this inspiration to alter the way he maintained landscapes. Gavin began composting his own green waste, reducing his chemical use, introducing Coastal's first no-mow areas, and doing whatever else he could to promote biodiversity.

Proud of how these changes had promoted more interactive, sensory, biodiverse landscapes, Gavin considered what positive impact we could make if the whole service could adopt these techniques. He saw opportunities everywhere to create spaces which were kinder to wild flora and fauna and which were under-utilised by either Coastal or its residents. Open areas of housing estates were either turfed or landscaped

with stone chippings and simple bedding plants, becoming spaces which were of no use to nature and treated with glyphosate weed-killer and other harmful chemicals.

In 2018, Gavin drafted a business case for a conservation and sustainability role which would look at how Coastal used land from a different angle, by trying to see the potential to accommodate pollinators and attract other wildlife in order to support the areas' ecology and help to tackle the twin problems of the climate and biodiversity crises.

The business case was accepted, and Gavin began a 12 month secondment in order to pilot his ideas. Within that time, the role was made permanent and for almost 3 years now, Coastal has employed a dedicated Sustainability and Conservation Coordinator.

The role is to act as a kind of agitator, working inside and alongside Coastal's estates teams, using a detailed knowledge of their work in order to suggest improvements to ways of working and land use which act with nature, not against it.

Successful projects to date have included;

- conducting an audit of 'dead spaces' throughout Coastal's estates for redevelopment;
- introducing on-site composting facilities, to reduce waste and increase engagement in sustainable horticulture;
- increasing awareness of climate change and biodiversity decline throughout our communities. During community events, Gavin would host a stall where he would create wildflower seed-bombs with children in spring, or create RSPB approved 'reindeer food' at Christmas etc., and talk to the community about the importance of environmental sustainability;

- hosting our annual resident gardening competition, but refocusing categories and criteria towards biodiversity, sustainability, recycling, health and wellbeing etc.;
- helping to assemble and facilitate an internal 'Sustainability Group'. A group of employees from across Coastal who explore and drive organisational sustainability initiatives;
- creating accessible gardening groups in communities where residents felt restricted by their facilities;
- creating a 'Sustainable Schemes Program', which encouraged caretakers to make sustainable 'pledges' on the schemes they maintain. Pledges included reduced chemical use, no-mow areas, wildflower sowing, tree planting etc.

The role has come to be one in which Coastal sees a great deal of value, and which has fundamentally influenced all areas of the organisation's work to focus more closely on sustainability and conservation. This all started because one member of staff had an idea and a passion which was supported by his employer.

Outcomes and achievements

- 500 native trees Planted in 2019 (Trees donated by The Conservation Volunteers 'I Dig Trees' program);
- 630 native trees planted in 2020 (Trees donated by The Woodland Trust);
- 'Sustainable Schemes Program' saw number of sustainable 'pledges' increase from 167 in 2018, to 320 in 2019;
- 'Sustainable Schemes Program' saw us achieve 'Bee Friendly' accreditation by Welsh Government in 2020;
- Coastal currently has 13 housing schemes composting their own waste;
- 'Estates Maintenance Calendar' will see grass cutting reduced from 12 months to 9 months, glyphosate usage reduced from 12 months to 3 months, Algoway spraying reduced from 12 months to 6 months, and Hedge/Shrub removal reduced from 12 months to 6 months.
- Annual spend on Glyphosate has almost halved since 2017 (£2,269 in 2017, £1,200 in 2020).
- We currently have 12 community gardens/allotments/planters that we have either helped install, help to maintain, or have allowed the community to take full control of.
- Coastal has replaced 9 diesel vans with electric vans.
- Coastal has replaced 9 petrol powered garden machines for battery operated machinery.
- Dedicated sustainability steering group, operational group and soon-to-be adopted strate